SELECTED WORKS OF
M. N. ROY

VOLUME II · 1923–1927

Edited by Sibnarayan Ray

SHOUT
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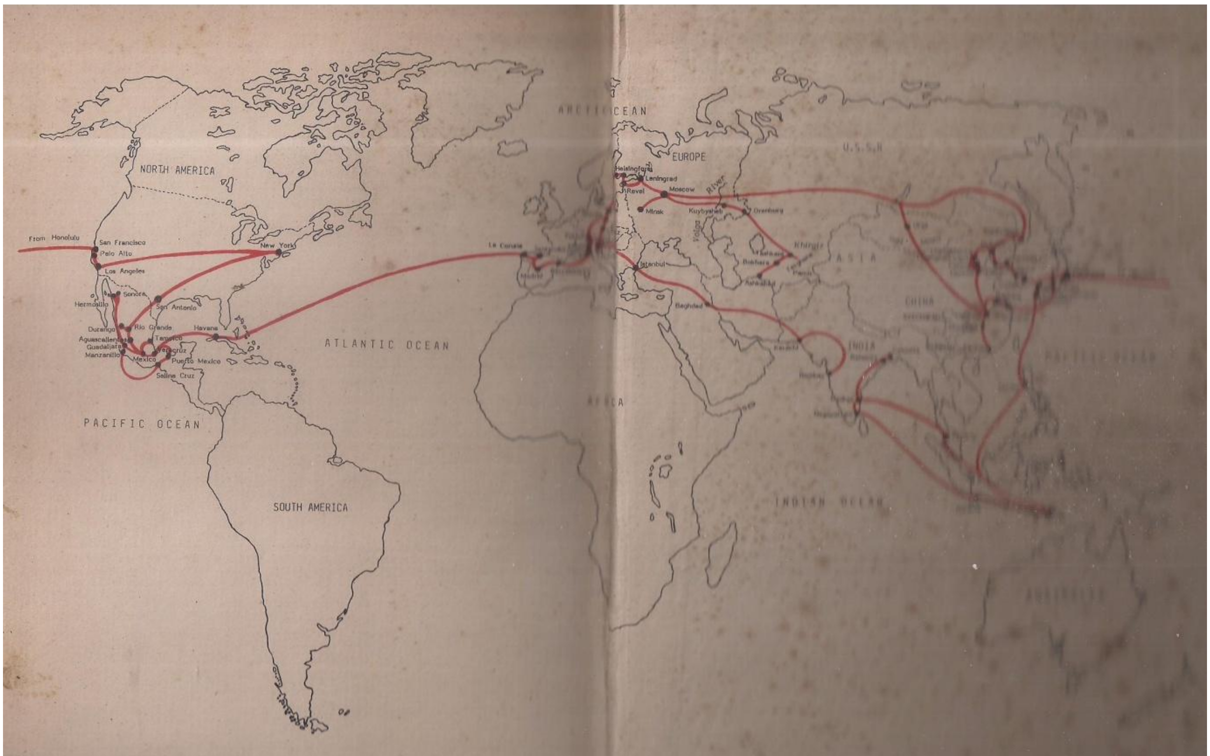
IT

M. N. Roy was an outstanding intellectual-activist of the first half of the twentieth century. He had few peers in the diversity and richness of his revolutionary experience. He took an active and leading part in revolutionary movements in India, Mexico, the Soviet Union and China. Roy was a political contemporary and colleague of stalwarts like Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Bukharin, Zinoviev and Borodin. The vicissitudes of Roy's life were indeed remarkable. At the same time, he was a penetrating and prolific writer, whose works run to over a hundred titles. His writings are indicative of his extraordinary analytical ability and the transcontinental sweep of his vision.

Volume II of the *Selected Works* presents a selection of his principal writings between 1923 and 1927. Many of these writings have not been available in print for a very long time as they were proscribed by the government immediately on publication. The volume includes the complete texts of his justly famous *Political Letters* and *Future of Indian Politics*, the *Open Letter to J. R. Macdonald*, his speeches at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, a selection of his articles in *The Vanguard, The Masses, Inprecor*, and *The Communist International*, and his major speeches in China where he was sent as Chief Comintern delegate in 1927. By 1926, Roy was at the height of his Comintern career—a member of its Executive Committee and Presidium, its Secretariat and Orgburo, Chairman of Eastern Commission and Joint Secretary of the Chinese Commission.

Professor Sibnarayan Ray was a colleague of M. N. Roy in his later years and has taught at the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay, Melbourne and California (Santa Barbara). He has also been Director of Rabindra-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, and he is currently Research Director, Indian Renaissance Institute. He edits a quarterly of ideas, *Jijnasa*.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M. N. Roy's odyssey in quest of freedom
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M. N. ROY

Volume II
1923–1927

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Edited by
SIBNARAYAN RAY

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Volume II (1923–1927)

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When, as a schoolboy of fourteen, I began my political life, which may end in nothing, I wanted to be free. Independence, complete and absolute, is a new fangled idea. The old fashioned revolutionaries thought in terms of freedom. In those days, we had not read Marx. We did not know about the existence of the proletariat. Still, many spent their lives in jail and went to the gallows. There was no proletariat to propel them. They were not conscious of class struggle. They did not have the dream of Communism. But they had the human urge to revolt against the intolerable conditions of life. They did not know exactly how those conditions could be changed. But they tried to change them, anyhow. I began my political life with that spirit, and I still draw my inspiration rather from that spirit than from the three Volumes of *Capital* or three hundred volumes by the Marxists.

M. N. Roy
New Orientation, Calcutta, 1982
pp. 121–2

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Editor's collection.

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In the first volume of the *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, I gratefully mentioned the persons and institutions who had in one way or another rendered service or assistance in connection with my editorial and research project on M. N. Roy. For the second volume I wish to acknowledge my debt specially to the following:

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and my wife Gita but for whose appreciation, forbearance and discreet assumption of all familial chores and obligations my unfunded studies and researches would virtually have been impossible to sustain.

Calcutta
21 March, 1987

Sibnarayan Ray

Introduction

In the introduction to the first volume of the Selected Works the problems, guidelines and general plan of this edition were stated. Briefly, the Selected Works are proposed to be edited and published in six volumes, the first five arranged in a chronological order, the sixth being a selection of personal, autobiographical and allied type of writings. The present volume covers the period from 1923 to 1927.

These five years are a testimonial of Roy reaching the apogée of his Comintern career. His extraordinary talent for both Marxist theory and praxis put him at the very top of the hierarchy of that international organization. He wrote, corresponded and moved extensively, and during the 1920s he had a seminal influence on radical movements in more than one Asian country. However, after his break with Moscow in 1929 the immensely powerful machinery of the Comintern was turned against him. In India his books and writings had always belonged to the political underground as whenever they reached our shores from abroad they were invariably proscribed by the government. During his years in jail (1931–36) communists in India had carried against him a malignant campaign of vilification. Students and young radicals of my generation were specifically instructed by our Marxist mentors and 'fellow-travelling' academics not to read Roy or even to meet any of his supporters. His works, like Trotsky's, were taboo. This double proscription, by the government and the communist leadership, made his writings virtually inaccessible, especially in India.

Fortunately much of his writings has survived in libraries and archives especially in Europe. I am sure more of his periodic and clandestine writings will be discovered by other scholars. My own inquiries have revealed several gaps in public and private collections. However, what I already have managed to obtain is intimidatingly large enough for a single editor. I have, in fact, spent many anguished hours debating with myself what may or may not be included. Once in Delhi a meeting of the Roy Centenary Committee was called at my instance to help me with some counsel on this matter. In their enthusiasm several members suggested that I should not exclude anything but make available to readers whatever I had in my Roy collection. But that would have meant not six but twenty or more volumes which was, of course, recognized to be an impractical proposition.

To indicate the proportion of what had perforce to be left out I shall briefly mention the procedure I have followed. My collection consists mainly of microfilm or photocopies of the originally published texts. After carefully going through each item I made my preliminary selection, and got the selected material typed out in two copies. In the case of the present volume the preliminary selection ran to a total of over five thousand typed pages. I have kept separately one full set of typescripts to be bound in several volumes for future reference. I went through the second set with great care again but this time rather ruthlessly, eliminating at first two thousand and then another two thousand pages. In the end the selection was reduced to about a thousand pages. With chronology, notes and editorial accessories, the volume now runs to about eleven hundred typed pages.

This volume includes full texts of two books (*Political Letters*, 1924 and *The Future of Indian Politics*, 1926), one booklet (*Open Letter to Macdonald* 1924), selected chapters of two books (*One Year of Non-Cooperation* 1923, and *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation* 1926), translation of six sections from *Kitaiskaia Revoliutsiia* (written 1927, published 1929), and of a crucial document from *Puti Mirovoi Revoliutsii* (1927), translation of Roy's speeches at the Fifth Congress from the *Protokoll* (published in 1924 from Moscow, reprinted at Erlangen in 1973), and selection of articles from *The Vanguard*, *The Masses of India*, *The Communist International* and *International Press Correspondence*. Wherever I have considered it necessary I have provided introductory editorial notes and relevant explanatory notes, but I have tried to keep these to a minimum in view of the size of the text.

In the introduction to the first volume I also wrote a short life of M. N. Roy. Since then the first part of my projected three volume biography of Roy 'In Freedom's Quest' has been serialized in *The Radical Humanist* (August 1985 to December 1986). In the present volume I have provided instead a fairly detailed chronology of the life and times of M. N. Roy. In 1959 I had prepared and published 'a short biographical note' in which the principal events of Roy's life were mentioned. In preparing that note I was privileged to draw upon the personal knowledge of several people who had been very close to Roy for many years, Ellen Roy, Evelyn Trent, Louise Geissler, Hari Kumar Chakravarty and Roy's youngest brother, Lalit Bhattacharya. The chronology given in this volume includes many more events than were known in 1959. The details have been gathered and sifted in the course of years of persistent inquiry. The chronology forms the skeleton of the projected full length biography. Besides dateables happenings in the life of Roy, it also mentions some important events of modern history which are specifically relevant to any serious study of Roy's writings and career.

Currently I am working on the third volume of the Selected Works which will cover the period 1928 to 1936. These were years of 'opposition' and imprisonment which brought out most sharply the contrast between the Promethean flame that was Roy's personality and the deepening darkness of his circumstances. A good part of the material comes from archives in Europe and has to be translated into English from the original in German; most of it has not been published before in book form. The third volume will also include selections from the manuscripts which he wrote in solitary confinement in Indian jails. I am both awed and excited by the prospect. I see the third volume as complementing the present one. Together they document the impassioned thoughts of a great revolutionary intellectual at the high and low points of his political career.

The Life and Times of M. N. Roy

A chronological outline

1882: Publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterji's *Anandamath* in Bengali.
1884: Publication of Georgi Plekhanov's *Our Differences*.
1885: First meeting of the Indian National Congress.
1887: 21 March—Birth of Narendranath Bhattacharya at Arbalia, a village in the 24 Parganas, Bengal, where his father Dinabandhu Bhattacharya was Head Pandit of local school; Naren a student of Jnan-Vikasini school at Arbalia up to the sixth class or standard.
1893–94: Publication of Aurobindo Ghose's series of essays 'New Lamps for Old' advocating revolutionary methods and ideals.
1894–95: Japan's war on China.
1896–99: Famine and Plague in India.
1898: Naren moved with his parents to Kodalia, another village in the 24 Parganas, where his maternal grandparents had bequeathed their house and property to his mother, Basanta Kumari; Naren's father retired from Head Panditship.
1898: Foundation of the Russian Social Democratic Party at Minsk.
1899–1905: Naren studied at Harinabhi Anglo-Sanskrit School; with some classmates began organizing free and voluntary social service activities among the rural poor; influence of Bankim Chandra and Vivekananda.
1900: Boxer uprising in China.

1902: Publication of Lenin's *What is to be done?*

1902: Anushilan Samiti and other underground revolutionary groups formed in Bengal; Naren probably introduced to some of them; influence of Sister Nivedita.

1903: Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the Second Congress of the Russian SDP.

1904: Publication of Rosa Luxemburg's critique: *Leninism or Marxism?*

1904: Publication of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay's militant nationalist journal *Sandhya*.

1904–5: Russo-Japanese war; Russia's defeat.

1905: Organization of the T'ung-meng Hui (Alliance Society)by Sun Yat-Sen; uprisings and constitutional developments in Russia.

1905: Death of Naren's father; Partition of Bengal; Naren expelled from Harinabhi School for organizing anti-partition meeting; joined underground revolutionary movement in Bengal; influence of Rabindra Nath Tagore's patriotic songs and of Sarala Devi.

1906: Foundation of the Muslim League; foundation of militant nationalist journals *Jugantar* and *Bandemataram*.

1906–8: Naren passed Entrance Examination of Bengal National College (founded August 1906 with Aurobindo Ghose as Principal) and studied at Bengal Technical Institute (founded July 1906 by Tarak Nath Palit); also organized a close-knit underground revolutionary group at Changripota; contact with Aurobindo, Barin Ghose and Jatindra Nath Mukherji.

1907: Foundation of Tata Iron and Steel Co; Moderate-Extremist split in the Indian National Congress at Surat.

1907: December—Naren carried out the first successful political dacoity (robbery) in Bengal at Changripota rail station.

1908: Naren arrested but released; death of mother Basanta Kumari.

1908: Foundation of Budi Utomo, a nationalist organization, in the Dutch East Indies.

1908–09: Arrest, trial and conviction of the first generation of Bengali revolutionary nationalist underground leadership.

1909: Morley-Minto reforms.

1909: Naren carried out political dacoity at Netra, together with Hari Kumar Chakravarty.

1910–11: Naren's arrest (January 1910) and trial, together with Jatin Mukherji and 44 others, in Howrah-Sibpur Conspiracy Case; discharged for lack of sufficient evidence in April 1911.

1911: Overthrow of the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz in Mexico by Francisco Madero; Republican revolution in China; Delhi Durbar and revocation of the Partition of Bengal.

1912: Amalgamation of T'ung-meng Hui and five groups in

Kuomintang under Sun Yat-Sen's leadership; Provisional Constitution in China with Yüan Shih-K'ai as President of the republic; foundation of Sarekat Islam in Dutch East Indies; removal of the Imperial capital of British India to Delhi.

1912–14: Naren reorganized the revolutionary underground in Bengal under Jatin Mukherji's overall leadership.

1913: Foundation of the Ghaddar Organization and it's journal by Lala Hardayal and others at San Francisco; assassination of Madero and civil war in Mexico.

1914: August—Outbreak of World War I; theft of 50 Mauser Pistols and 46,000 rounds of ammunition by underground revolutionaries at Calcutta; setting up of the 'Indian National Party' in Berlin, attached to the German General Staff.

1914–15: Armed uprising planned in India by the revolutionary underground; contacts established with groups in the United States, Germany and South-East Asia.

1915: Founding of the radical journal *Ch'ing Nien* (Youth) by Ch'en Tu-Hsiu in Shanghai; International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald; Japan's Twenty-One Demands on China; Venustiano Carranza recognized as President of Mexico by the U.S. Government.

1915: February—Garden Reach robbery by Naren and his associates; his arrest and release on bail.

March—Promise of German assistance received by Indian revolutionaries in Bengal.

April—Naren sent to Batavia under assumed name Charles A. Martin to negotiate with German representatives for supply of arms, ammunition and money.

June—Naren returned to India, met Jatin Mukherji to finalize plans.

August—Failure of German arms supply plan; Naren, alias Martin, set out for Batavia again to make new plans with the Germans.

1915: September—Conspiracy plans discovered by the police; armed fight near Balasore between a group of revolutionaries and the police; the leader Jatin Mukherji wounded and died in hospital.

1915: September to May, 1916—Naren moved in search of arms through China, Japan and the Far East; met Sun Yat-Sen; Naren advised by German Ambassador to proceed to Berlin to get his plan (for purchase of arms from Yunnan) approved by the German Imperial Staff.

1916: Death of Yüan Shih-K'ai and prolonged struggle for power among regional war-lords in China; Congress-League Pact at

Lucknow; International Socialist Conference at Kienthal; publication of Rosa Luxemburg's *Die Krise der Sozialdemokratie*.

1916: June—Naren reached San Francisco; arrival flashed in local dailies; the British intelligence agents were on his trail, he became guest of Dhanagopal Mukherji at Stanford, met Evelyn Trent, changed name to Manabendra Nath Roy.

October—Roy moved to New York, met Lajpat Rai and got acquainted with American radicals.

1917: March—Arrested by American police, questioned and released with warning.

April—U.S. declared war on Germany; Roy's 'Open Letter to the U.S. President Wilson'.

June—Roy and Evelyn, recently married in New York, escaped to Mexico with letter of introduction from David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University, to General Salvador Alvarado, radical Governor of the province of Yucatan in Mexico.

1917: New Constitution of Mexico under President Venustiano Carranza (1914–20) which promised land to peasants and put restrictions on the church; February revolution in Russia and end of Tsarist rule; publication of Lenin's *The State and Revolution*; October revolution: Bolsheviks capture power in Russia under Lenin's leadership.

1917–18: Roy contacted by the German Embassy in Mexico and provided with funds; his plans to buy Chinese arms and transport them across the mountain frontiers to Indian revolutionaries did not work out; sent money to Rash Behari Bose in Japan and to Indian revolutionaries in the U.S.; met socialist and radical groups in Mexico and joined the local Socialist Party; learnt Spanish, contributed articles on India to the daily *El Pueblo*; was introduced to President Carranza and soon became his friend; contributed to and was editorially associated with the English section of the daily *EL Heraldo de Mexico*; lectured at the Mexico University at the invitation of its Rector, Maestro Casas; converted Socialist Party organ *Lucha de los classes* into a regular weekly and bought the party its own printing press; ran and financed the journal *El Socialista*; published his booklets in Spanish, *El Camino para la paz duradera del Mundo* (The Way to Durable World Peace), *Carta Abierta A Su Excelencia Woodrow Wilson* (Open Letter to His Excellency Woodrow Wilson: Spanish translation of his 1917 'Open Letter' in English), and *La Voz de la India* (The Voice of India, 80 pages, consisting of three articles which include the 'Open Letter' to Wilson); also published his first major work, *La India, Su Pasado, Su Presente Y*

Su Porvenir (India, Her Past, Present and Future, 198 pages); organized a conference of the Socialist Party of Mexico and was elected its General Secretary.

1918: Montagu-Chelmsford Report; Sedition Committee Report on revolutionary organizations and movements in India. Formation of Marxist study groups in Peking under the leadership of Li Ta-Chao; abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II and proclamation of Republic in Germany; Spartakusbund convention and founding of the Communist Party of Germany.

1919: Murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht; foundation of the Communist International in Moscow; May Fourth movement in China; liquidation of Soviet Republics in Hungary and Bavaria. First all-India civil disobedience movement; Punjab disturbances and Jalianwallabagh massacre; Government of India Act 1919.

1919: 25 August–4 September—First National Congress of the Socialist Party of Mexico with Roy as organizer and moving spirit. Arrival of Soviet emissary Michael Borodin in Mexico; meeting and friendship with Roy.

October-November—Founding of El Partido Communista de Mexico under Roy's leadership; elected a delegate to the Second Congress of the Communist International.

December—Roy left Mexico with Evelyn Roy from port of Veracruz by transatlantic liner Alfonso XIII carrying Mexican diplomatic passports with their names given as Senor and Senora Roberto Alleny Villa Garcia; disembarked at Santandor in Spain; met Socialists and Anarchists at Madrid and Barcelona; proceeded to Germany.

1920: January–April—Roy in Berlin; made friends with Thalheimer, Mayer, Levi, Froelich and other leaders of the Communist Party of Germany; also met old-time Marxists and Revisionists, Bernstein, Kautsky and Hilferding; friendship with S. J. Rutgers and H. J. Sneevliet (alias Maring), founders of the Communist Party of Holland and closely associated with radical movements in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia); also met Karl Radek of the Comintern and Bhupendranath Datta of the Indian Revolutionary Committee In Berlin.

May—Roy reached Moscow; met Chicherin and Karakhan, Commissar and Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs; also met Angelica Balabanova, first General Secretary of the Comintern, and Zinoview, its chairman; also met Lenin.

June–July—'An Indian Communist Manifesto' written by Roy published in the *Glasgow Herald*.

19 July – 7 August—Second Congress of the Communist In-

ternational; beginning of Roy's friendship with Bukharin; met Gorky, Lukacs, Varga, Rakosi, Cachin, Rosmer, John Reed, Louis Fraina, Sylvia Pankhurst and others; Lenin's 'Theses on the National and Colonial Question' and Roy's 'Supplementary Theses' adopted by the Congress (28–29 July); briefly saw Trotsky at the Polish battlefront; elected member of the Comintern's 'Small Bureau'.

August–October—Provisional All-India Central Revolutionary Committee formed in Moscow with Roy elected as Chairman; Central Asiatic Bureau of the Comintern set up with Roy, Sokolnikov and Sakharov as members; Roy in Tashkent as secretary-in-charge of Turkestan Bureau; established Indian Military School (INDUSKI KURS) for the training of the Muhajirs; hostility to Roy from Abdur Rabb and Prativadi Acharya of the Indian Revolutionary Association.

17 October—Communist Party of India formed at Tashkent with Mohammad Shafiq as Secretary; Communist Party of Turkestan advised (20.12.1920).

1920: Publication of Lenin's *Left-wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*; establishment of an independent nationalist government in Turkey by Kemal Pasha; establishment of a nationalist government in Canton by Sun Yat-Sen in opposition to the warlord government in Peking; G. M. Voitinsky sent as Comintern emissary to China. Sessions of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta (September) and at Nagpur (December); launching of Khilafat and Satyagraha movements and Gandhi's emergence as the supreme leader of the Indian National Congress; inauguration of All-India Trade Union Congress at Bombay with Lala Lajpat Rai as President.

1921: Communist Party of China founded at Shanghai with Ch'en Tu-Hsiu as Secretary; Sneevliet (Maring) in China as Comintern emissary; Sun Yat-Sen elected President of the Chinese Nationalist Republic at Canton. Moplah rebellion in Malabar; Indian National Congress session at Ahmedabad (with its elected President Chitta Ranjan Das in Jail).

1921: February—Roy and Evelyn returned to Moscow.

March—Closure of INDUSKI KURS at Tashkent.

21 April—Establishment of Kommunisticheskii Universitet Trudiashchikhsia Vostoka (KUTV: Communist University of the Toilers of the East) at Moscow under Commissariat of Nationalities headed by Stalin; Roy one of its political Directors; beginning of Roy's friendship with Stalin.

April–June—Delegation of Indian Nationalist Revolutionaries (Virendranath Chattopadhyay and others) in Moscow; their opposition to Roy; their views and demands rejected by the Comintern.

May—Roy's draft Theses on the Eastern Question published in Urdu and English.

22 June – 12 July—Third Congress of the Comintern in Moscow; Roy's argument with Trotsky on 'the World Crisis and the Tasks of the Comintern'; his differences with Chang T'ai-Lei in the Eastern Commission over the role of the bourgeoisie in colonies and semi-colonies; his protest against the Comintern's neglect of the Eastern Question.

1921: August–September—Roy wrote 'Manifesto to the 36th Indian National Congress, Ahmedabad, 1921' and sent bundles of printed copies with his emissary Nalini Gupta to India; Gupta met Muzaffar Ahmad, Nazrul Islam and others in Calcutta; Roy sent groups of trained Muhajirs to India.

September—Roy's letter to the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

October—Roy completed writing the text of *India in Transition*.

December—Roy's articles 'India in Transition Stage' and 'Present Events in India' published in the Comintern's multilingual journal *Communist International* No. 3; Roy's article 'Revolutionary India' in *Inprecor* (20 December 1921).

1922: Stalin became Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party; USSR formally established by a resolution of the Tenth all-Russian Congress of Soviets; Mussolini became Dictator of Italy; First Congress of All-China Federation of Labour at Canton; revolt against Sun Yat-Sen and his flight from Canton; Second Congress of the Chinese Communist Party and publication of its Manifesto; Special Plenum of the Central Committee of the CCP where Sneevliet pushed through the Comintern policy of individual communist membership in the Kuomintang. Civil disobedience movement in India called off by Gandhi after Chauri Chaura; Indian National Congress session at Gaya with Chitta Ranjan Das as President.

1922: January—Russian translation of *India in Transition* published from Moscow.

21–27 January—First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East at Moscow and Petrograd; Roy and Safarov elected to its Presidium; Safarov supported Roy's position.

January–February–March—Roy's articles in *Inprecor*.

April–May—Publication of English Edition of *India in Transition* from Berlin (fictitious imprint Geneva); the Roys moved to Berlin and set up their headquarters there.

15 May—Publication by Roy of *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* from Berlin (fortnightly).

15 July—Roy's 'Manifesto to the All-India Congress Committee'.

August–September—Publication of German version of *India in Transition* from Hamburg; publication of *India's Problem and Its Solution*, and of *What Do We Want* (fictitious imprint Geneva).

September—Government of India proscribed *The Vanguard, India in Transition, India's Problem* and *What Do We Want*.

1 October—Name of *The Vanguard* changed to *The Advance-Guard*.

October-November—Roy succeeded through his writings, correspondence and emissaries in establishing small communist groups in Bengal (Ahmad), Bombay (Dange), Madras (Singaravelu), United Provinces (Usmani) and the Punjab (Ghulam Hossain). According to Intelligence Bureau reports, Roy's articles in *The Vanguard*, though banned by the Government, were often reproduced, translated and approvingly used by various journals in India like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika, Vartaman* (Kanpur), *Navayugam* (Guntur/Telugu), *The Independent* (Allahabad), *Atmasakti* (Bengali), *Dhumketu* (Bengali), *Desher Bani* (Noakhali/Bengali) etc.

5 November – 5 December—Fourth Congress of the Comintern (opened at Petrograd and then moved to Moscow); Roy elected to the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) as a candidate member (among other candidate members were Lenin and Trotsky); his views on the Eastern Question upheld in the Congress theses though opposed by Tan Malaka (Indonesia) and Van Ravesteyn (Holland); Roy wrote to his Indian Communist contacts proposing formation of an underground Communist Party of India, and a legal 'revolutionary mass party' to include the 'left wing' of the National Congress, the Trade Union Movement and the oppressed peasantry; Roy's 'Programme for the Indian National Congress' at Gaya ('Complete Independence', 'Election of a National Assembly by Universal Suffrage', 'Establishment of a Federated Republic of India', 'Abolition of Landlordism', 'Free and compulsory education', etc.) published in *The Advance-Guard* of 1 December 1922 and printed and sent out as a pamphlet to various persons and organizations in India; the issue of *The Advance-Guard* banned, 540 copies intercepted by the police at Gaya, but Roy's programme cabled by Reuter and published in all major Indian newspapers.

1923: 6 January—Roy's private letter to Chitta Ranjan Das through intermediary.

January—*The Advance-Guard* proscribed by the Government of India; from the issue of 15 February 1923 Roy changed the name of the journal to *The Vanguard*: *Central Organ Communist Party of India* (with fictitious imprint Bombay/Calcutta/Madras); thus *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* (Imprint Berlin/Paris/London/Zurich/Rome) had nine consecutive fortnightly issues 15 May – 15 September); and *The Advance-Guard* had also 9 consecutive fortnightly issues (1 October 1922 – 1 February 1923); *The Vanguard* continued as a forthnightly till it was changed to a monthly under the new name *The Masses of India* in January 1925.

3 February—'Open Letter to Chitta Ranjan Das and his Followers' published in *The Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 1, 15 February 1923.

April—Moscow-Tashkent Communist Conspiracy Case at Peshawar.

May—Roy's communist contacts in India (Usmani, Ahmad and Hossain) arrested.

June—Roy elected to the Comintern Presidium; publication of *One Year of Non-Cooperation from Ahmedabad to Gaya* by M. N. Roy and Evelyn Roy from Berlin (fictitious imprint Calcutta).

December—Roy's emissary Nalini Gupta arrested in Calcutta.

1923: A. A. Joffe and Sun Yat-Sen issued joint Manifesto at Shanghai; Peking-Hangkow Railway striking workers massacred by warlord Wu P'ei-Fu; Third Congress of Chinese Communist Party at Canton and its decision to cooperate with Kuomintang; Michael Borodin as Comintern emissary at Canton; Borodin appointed by Sun Yat-Sen as his adviser; failure of insurrection in Bulgaria and of attempted revolution in Germany. Swaraj Party formed by Chitta Ranjan Das; Tariff Board set up by Government of India; Indian Congress session at Kakinada.

1924: January—Death of Lenin; Roy expelled from Berlin; he moved his European headquarters to Zurich.

February—Roy's letter to Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald.

March—Publication of Roy's *Political Letters* from The Vanguard Bookshop, Zurich; complaint filed at Kanpur against Roy and his Communist associates charging them with conspiracy to establish a branch of the Comintern in India and to deprive 'the King of his Sovereignty of British India'; Kanpur trial begun in April with Roy, in absentia, as principal accused.

March—Roy moved headquarters to Annecy in France, and then to Paris; his Open Letter to Prime Minister and Secretary of State on behalf of the Communist Party of India published in *Inprecor*.

May—Warrant issued by district magistrate of Kanpur for Roy's arrest.

June—Publication of Roy's *Open Letter to Macdonald* on the Kanpur case.

26 June – 8 July—Fifth Congress of the Communist International; Roy elected full member of the Comintern Executive and candidate member of the Presidium; also member of Colonial Commission; Roy's sharp differences with Manuilsky; 'the draft resolution on the National and Eastern Questions' drawn up by Manuilsky on behalf of ECCI not endorsed by the Fifth Congress; draft sent to Stalin for comments; on 31 July he wrote to Manuilsky endorsing Roy's view and criticizing the Draft.

1924: First Congress of Kuomintang in Canton and reorganization of Kuomintang; Soviet arms, advisers and funds sent to Sun Yat-Sen's government in Canton; establishment of Whampoa Military Academy under supervision of General Galen (V. K. Bluecher) to train Kuomintang Army Officers, with Chiang Kai-Shek as commandant and Chou En-Lai as Political Officer; Stalin-Trotsky struggle for power and succession in the Soviet Union; Stalin's declaration of the policy of 'Socialism in One Country'; Caliphate abolished by Kemal Pasha. Central Legislative Assembly inaugurated in Delhi; Indian National Congress session at Belgaum with Gandhi as President.

1925: January—Publication of Roy's monthly *The Masses of India* from Paris; regular publication maintained till April, 1928.

30 January—Roy expelled from France; moved to Luxembourg; unsuccessful efforts by French intellectuals under Henri Barbusse's leadership to get the expulsion order rescinded.

March—Death of Sun Yat-Sen; election of Wang Ching-Wei, leader of Left Kuomintang, as chairman of Political and Military Councils, and of the National Government.

May—Stalin's speech to the students of the University for the Peoples of the East; Roy's analysis of Indian politico-economic developments supported.

June—Death of Chitta Ranjan Das.

July—Special meeting at Amsterdam on Comintern's work in the colonies and conflict between Communist Party of Great Britain and Eastern Bureau of the Comintern; meeting attended by Roy, Evelyn, Sneevliet, C. P. Dutt and other representatives of CPGB.

September—Instructions from the Comintern's Colonial Bureau to constitute a Foreign Bureau of the Communist Party of India under Roy's supervision and control with Clements Palme Dutt of CPGB as one of its members.

November—Labour Swaraj Party formed in Bengal under the leadership of the poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

December—Communist Party of India formed at Kanpur.

1925: Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of China at Canton; First Congress of Peasant Unions (mainly of Kwantung province); Second Congress of Trade Unions at Canton; 30 May incident at Shanghai and anti-foreign movement; Western Hills Group formed demanding expulsion of Communists from the Kuomintang; foundation of Sun Yat-Sen University in Moscow; Fifth Enlarged Plenum of ECCI: resolution on 'bolshevization of Communist Parties'; attack on Trotsky and on 'opposition groups' in the Comintern, sharp reprimand to Brandler, Thalheimer and Radek; 'organization conference' of ECCI under Piatnitsky's chairmanship for developing 'cells' and 'factions' in non-communist organizations and for imposing total control over party members. Split in the Swaraj Party; cotton excise abolished; session of Indian National Congress at Kanpur with Sarojini Naidu as President.

1925–26: Evelyn's break with Roy and return to the United States.

1926: Second Congress of Kuomintang; Chiang Kai-Shek's coup against the Communists at Canton; Wang Ching-Wei's retirement to France for a rest-cure; Third Trade Union Congress at Canton; beginning of Northern Expedition with Chiang Kai-Shek as commander-in-chief, capture of Wuhan; national government removed from Canton to Wuhan; debate in USSR on 'Socialism in One Country'; General Strike in Britain; Swarajists walk out of the Central Legislature; Hindu-Muslim riot at its peak; Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, Factories Act in India, definition of 'Dominion Status' at the Imperial Conference; Indian National Congress Session at Gauhati with S. Srinivasa Iyengar as President.

1926: January–December—Roy's articles in his organ *The Masses of India* on 'The Indian Communists and the Communist International', 'Indian Bourgeoisie and British Imperialism', the Hindu-Muslim communal riot at Calcutta, critique of 'National Communism', 'How to organize a Working Class Party', and 'Programme of a Working Class Party', provided guidelines to communists in India.

1926: February—Labour Swaraj Party changed to Peasants' and Workers' Party with Dr Naresh Chandra Sengupta as

President; Roy's *The Aftermath of Non-Co-operation* published by Communist Party of Great Britain, London.

February–March—Sixth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern; Roy elected to Comintern Presidium as a full member (together with Bukharin, Zinoviev, Stalin, Togliatti and others); also elected member of Comintern Secretariat and Orgbureau, and chairman of the Eastern Commission; also member of the editorial board of the *Communist International*.

March–April—Roy sent a printing press to Pondicherry for the CPI to bring out its own publications from India.

June-July—Publication of Roy's *The Future of Indian Politics*, London, 1926; also its Russian edition, Moscow, and German edition, Hamburg and Berlin.

November–December—Seventh Plenum of ECCI; Zinoviev removed from his post as Comintern President; Roy re-elected to the Presidium and Secretariat (with Bukharin, Kuusinen, Togliatti, Manuilsky and others); also elected member of the British and the Agrarian Commissions and as member-secretary of the Chinese Commission with Petrov; fierce debate at the Plenum on the situation in China and Comintern's policy towards the Kuomintang; Roy advocated a programme of agrarian revolution in China and 'revolution from below'; the Plenum resolution of 16 December sought both collaboration with Kuomintang and agrarian revolution; after the close of the plenum Roy was sent to China as head of the Comintern delegation.

December—Philip Spratt, sent by CPGB, and Fazl Ilahi (alias Qurban), sent by Roy, reached India to help in organizing the Communist Party, to promote the formation of a Workers' and Peasants' Party which would provide the communists with a legal cover and wider base, and to place communists in influential positions within the Indian National Congress; 'A Manifesto to the All India National Congress meeting at Gauhati' issued in the name of the Communist Party of India but written by Roy and published in London.

1927: January—Roy accompanied by Louise Geissler arrived in Vladivostok on way to Canton; Chinese Workers take over British Concession at Hankow.

February—Roy and Louise in Canton; Roy's articles warning against the USA, foreign intervention and Chinese militarists; Mao Tse-Tung's 'Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan'.

March—Third Plenum of the Executive of the Kuomintang boycotted by Chiang Kai-Shek.

1 April—Roy reached Changsha, welcomed by the provin-

cial government of Hunan and greeted by a 'gathering of a hundred thousand people'.

April—Return of Wang Ching-Wei from Europe via Moscow; joint statement of Wang and Ch'en Tu-Hsiu supporting continued Communist-Kuomintang collaboration; Roy reached Hankow accompanied by T'an P'ing-Shan, Communist Minister of Agriculture in the Left Wuhan government; Communists in temporary control of the Central Executive of the Kuomintang and of the Government in Wuhan.

12 April—Shanghai Communists rounded up and their labour unions decimated by Chiang Kai-Shek's armed squads.

13 April—Roy's telegram to Chiang.

13–15 April—Roy's speech to the Chinese Communist Party leadership on 'the Base and the Social Forces of the Revolution', advocating agrarian revolution which would provide 'a revolutionary democratic base', and opposing the Northern Expedition; Roy's view opposed by Borodin and Ch'en Tu-Hsiu.

16 April—Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party adopted a resolution supporting Roy's proposal, but two days later the CC retracted its resolution and decided to support the Kuomintang's plan to despatch troops to the north.

17 April—Wang expelled Chiang from the Kuomintang; Chiang formed separate nationalist government at Nanking.

April—Meeting of Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang Left; disagreement among the leaders over Roy's proposal of 'revolutionary confiscation' and re-distribution of land among the peasants.

28 April—Li Ta-Chao and several Communist leaders executed in Peking by warlord Chang Tso-Lin; Soviet Embassy in Peking raided.

April–May—Fifth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held at Hankow; Roy proposed a programme of 'agrarian revolution, arming the peasants, rural self-government, creation of state-machinery for realization of democratic dictatorship and creation of a revolutionary army'; Roy's proposal opposed by Borodin who had been in China since 1923 and who advocated collaboration between the Communists and the Kuomintang; the 'Theses', 'Resolution on the Agrarian Question' and 'Manifesto' adopted by the Congress, were close to Roy's views, but the leadership continued to be divided and irresolute; spontaneous peasant uprisings occurred which were sought to be restrained by the Chinese Communist leadership on Borodin's instruction; frustrated by Borodin, who controlled the purse string and prevented Roy from raising an armed force and pushing the programme of agrarian revolution, Roy appealed directly to Moscow.

May—Changsha riots; rebellion of Hsia Tao-Yin crushed by Communist general Yeh T'ing.

18–30 May—Eighth Plenum of Comintern Executive (ECCI) devoted entirely to the Chinese Situation and the danger of war; Stalin-Bukharin line strongly attacked by Trotsky and Zinoviev; resolution adopted at the Plenum advocated mass-mobilization by the Chinese Communists working within the Left Kuomintang and taking part in the Wuhan government of Wang Ching-Wei.

1 June—Stalin's telegram to Roy supporting land-seizure by peasants and agrarian revolution but still requiring collaboration with Left Kuomintang; Borodin and the Chinese Communist leadership decided to 'shelve' Stalin's instruction; Roy communicated to Wang Ching-Wei Stalin's message expecting him to co-operate with the Communists against Chiang Kai-Shek and the Kuomintang right wing; Borodin cabled to Stalin against Roy.

15 June—Roy presented to the Chinese Politbureau the 'Draft Platform of the National Revolution'; Borodin demanded 'withdrawal of the agrarian question' and restraining of mass movements.

20 June—Roy's address to the Fourth Congress of the All-China Federation of Labour.

13 July—Communist withdrawal from Wuhan government but not from Kuomintang.

16 July—Kuomintang government at Wuhan began rounding up Communists and executing them; Borodin and Roy as representatives of Soviet Union were allowed to depart.

August—Communist uprising at Nanchang under direction of new Comintern representative, Besso Lominadze, crushed; emergency conference of Chinese Communist Party and removal of Ch'en Tu-Hsiu from General Secretary's position.

August-September—Roy returned to Moscow crossing the Mongolian deserts and proceeding by way of Urga; submitted his report and relevant documents on the situation in China to Comintern.

September-October—'Autumn Harvest Uprising' in Hunan crushed; refuge taken by Mao Tse-Tung and remnants of the Communist army in the Chingkan mountain; Kuomintang government moved from Wuhan to Nanking.

September—Trotsky expelled from the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

November—Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Soviet Union and met Roy. Special Plenum of CCP executive blamed Mao for failure of 'Autumn Harvest Uprising' and T'an P'ing-Shan for failure in Nanchang.

December—Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; besides Trotsky and Zinoviev, seventy-five leading members of the Opposition (to Stalin) were expelled (these included Radek, Kamenev, Rakovsky, Safarov etc.); Trotsky exiled. Communist uprising in Canton under supervision of Comintern representative, Heinz Neumann, crushed; Wang Ching-Wei relinquished his post and left Shanghai for France; Chiang Kai-Shek reappointed by Kuomintang Govt. as Commander-in-Chief. Madras Session of Indian National Congress; adoption of 'Complete Independence' as goal.

30 December—Roy's letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India intercepted by the police and subsequently published in *The Statesman* of 18 August 1928 and made famous as 'the Assembly Letter'.

1927: Publication of Roy's books *La Libération nationale des Indes* and *Les Alliés Internationaux de l'Opposition du P. C. et de l'U.R.S.S.*, Paris.

1928: 9–25 February—Ninth Plenum of the ECCI at Moscow; extreme leftwing policy of 'class against class', and of 'social democracy as the main enemy' formulated; Stalin in control of the CPSU and the Comintern; Roy re-appointed a member of the Presidium, but incapacitated by serious attack of mastoiditis; the Plenum resolution on China vindicated Stalin's policy without in any way blaming Roy or Borodin, but Roy was virtually interned in Moscow and left without proper medical treatment.

24 March—Roy's 'Draft Resolution on the Indian Question'.

April—Roy brought to Berlin from Moscow by his friends for medical treatment and care; period of convalescence at St. Moritz.

January-April—Articles in *The Masses of India* on 'the Heroic Struggle of the Chinese workers and peasants', boycott of the Simon Commission and the historic need for the 'election of a Constituent Assembly', the Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU and the Ninth Plenum of ECCI, etc; publication of Roy's *Die Internationalen Verbundeten der Opposition in der KPDSU*, Hamburg.

June—Kuomintang captured Peking; Chiang's National Government began to be recognized as legal government by most foreign powers.

17 July – 1 September—Sixth Congress of the Comintern; adoption of extreme left policy, of total opposition to Socialists and Social Democrats in every country as 'having become counter-revolutionary'; approval given to Stalin's doctrines of 'Socialism in one country', planned industrialization and 'dekulakization', and total subordination of the Comintern to the needs and dictates of the Soviet Union; due to illness Roy did not attend the Congress; distorted versions of his views were presented and severely attacked by Kuusinen and others who charged him with the authorship of the 'decolonization thesis'; however, no penalty was proposed except that he was no longer a member of the Comintern Executive or any of its other bodies. Sixth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in Moscow adopting militant line under Li Li-San's leadership.

September-October—Roy met in Berlin his future wife, Ellen Gottschalk.

October—Roy's statement from Berlin to ECCI 'On the Indian Question in the Sixth Congress' defending and explaining his position.

November—'Communist Opposition' in Germany under the leadership of Brandler and Thalheimer began publishing their weekly organ *Gegen den Strom* (Against the Current); during 1928 seven issues plus one special issue were published; in 1929 fifty-two regular issues plus nine special issues were brought out; the 'Opposition' stressed the growing danger of fascism and Nazism in Europe and wanted the Comintern to give up the extreme left line of the Sixth Congress and to work for a united front with socialists and social democrats against Hitler's forces; Roy's assessment of the international situation was closer to the Brandler-Thalheimer Opposition but he did not join them till mid-1929; an 'Open Letter' from the ECCI Presidium condemning Brandler and Thalheimer for leaving Moscow and going back to Germany without permission, and asking them to appear before the Central Control Commission of the CPSU; the German 'Communist Opposition' also brought out *Volksrecht*.

December—Roy's article in *Inprecor* (27 December 1928) on 'The Indian National Congress'.

1928: Simon Commission in India; Nehru Report and All-Parties' Conference; opposition to Nehru Report from M. A. Jinnah and his break with the Congress; Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress.

1929: January-March—Roy's articles published in *Inprecor* on 'The German Communist Opposition', 'The ways of Indian Revolution', 'Workers' and Peasants' Party of India', 'The Bourgeoisie and National Revolution in India', etc.; also his articles on 'The Indian Proletariat' and 'The Situation in China' published in *The Daily Worker*, New York.

Roy's Reports and Documents on China submitted to the ECCI published officially from Moscow and Leningrad under the title *Kitaiskaia revoliutisiia i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*.

Comintern support to Workers' and Peasants' Party withdrawn; Comintern characterization of Indian National Congress as 'a capitalist party' and of Indian Independence League as 'a counter-revolutionary manoeuvre'; ECCI Manifesto on the revolutionary movement in India.

20 March—Meerut Conspiracy arrests.

3–19 July—Tenth Plenum of ECCI; removal of Bukharin from the chief editorship of *Pravda* and his expulsion from the Comintern Presidium; social democracy equated with fascism; further elaboration of the new ultra left policy adopted at the Sixth Congress; Manuilsky declared that there was no Communist Party of India; Roy attacked by Manuilski and Kuusinen for publishing his critical views in Opposition journals, and his exclusion from the Comintern demanded and accepted.

September—News reported in *Gegen den Strom* (36.7) that Roy was '*no longer* a member of the Comintern'. On 7 September Roy wrote 'An Open Letter to the Members of the Communist International' explaining his position and points of disagreement with the policy of the Sixth Congress; the letter was published in *Gegen den Strom* under the title 'Meine Verbrechen' (My Crime) in its 37th issue of 1929; from the 39th issue of the journal Roy began publishing a series of 12 articles on 'Die Krisis der Kommunistischen Internationale' which was completed in the 13th issue of 1930.

13 December—Formal announcement in *Inprecor* that 'Roy, by contributing to the Brandler press and by supporting Brandler organization, has placed himself outside the ranks of the Communist International'.

1929: Ch'en Tu-Hsiu expelled from the Chinese Communist Party; his 'Open Letter'; new base and Soviet regime set up by Mao Tse-Tung in south Kiangsi. Indian National Congress session at Lahore declared 'complete independence' as its goal. Beginning of the Great Depression.

1928–32: First Five Year Plan in the Soviet Union; collectivization of peasants.

1930: Roy's contributions on India, China, Comintern Policy etc., continued to be published regularly in the Opposition journals *Gegen den Strom* and *Internationale Nachrichten der Kommunistischen Opposition* (INKOPP); in the former they appeared regularly right up to issue No. 18 of 1932 and less frequently in later issues, and in the latter up to No. 5 of June 1930; Roy and August Thalheimer were joint editors of INKOPP.

1930: August—Tayab Shaikh, Roy's most loyal associate among the Indians in Berlin, sent to India bringing from Roy a 'Manifesto to the Revolutionary Vanguard of the Toiling Masses of India'.

August-December—'Royist' group formed in Bombay and became active; Roy's major work *Revolution und Konterrevolution in China* published from Berlin by Soziologische Verlagsanstalt; the German version was translated by Paul Froelich from Roy's original manuscript in English; Roy's incomplete draft manuscript on the 'Decline and Fall of the British Empire' left behind in Berlin; he left Europe for India on 24 November.

11 December—Roy reached Karachi by land-route via Istanbul and Baghdad with a stolen passport in the name of 'Banerji' and proceeded to Bombay where he adopted the name 'Dr Mahmud'.

1930: 'Independence Day' celebrated by Indian National Congress (26th January); Civil Disobedience Movement launched (March); First Round Table Conference (November). Li Li-San pushed out from leadership of Chinese Communist Party by Wang Ming and 'Returned Students from Russia' (November).

1931: January–July—Roy organized clandestine publication of *The Masses*, his new organ; also *Independent India* under the editorship of Charles Mascarenhas from Bombay; with Shaikh and others he organized the 'Committee of Action for Independence' and 'League of Indian Independence', with units in Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Poona, Baroda, Benares etc.; travelled extensively in North India forming local units of an underground political organization, which was subsequently named 'Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class'; helped his associates to organize trade unions and establish themselves in leading positions in the All-India Trade Union Congress; met Jawaharlal Nehru, attended as Dr Mahmud the Karachi Session of the Congress at Nehru's invitation and influenced Nehru in revising the draft of the 'Fundamental Rights Resolution'; provided underground support and organizational guidance to the Central Peasants' League and to peasant uprisings in U.P. (April–May).

February—Roy's article on the Indian Situation in *Gegen den Strom*.

April—Roy's article on the Indian Situation in the *Revolutionary Age*, New York.

21 July—Roy arrested in Bombay and taken to Kanpur.

3 November - 16 December—Roy's trial took place not in open court but in the jail behind prison walls; he was manacled and taken to the trial by force; he conducted his own defence but was not allowed to put forward his defence statement.

1931: Gandhi-Irwin Pact; Second Round Table Conference. Wang Ming as General Secretary of Chinese Communist Party; Japanese aggression in Mukden; First All China Congress of Soviets at Juichin, Kiangsi; establishment of a Chinese Soviet Republic with Mao Tse-Tung as Chairman.

1932: 9 January—Roy sentenced to twelve years' transportation.

1932: Roy's defence statement smuggled out and published simultaneously under the titles 'My defence' and 'I accuse' by Roy Defence Committee respectively from Pondicherry and New York; also smuggled out and published *Our Task in India*.

1932: Communal Award; the Poona Pact; Third Round Table Conference. Ch'en Tu-Hsiu arrested in Shanghai by Kuomintang and sentenced to imprisonment; CCP Central Committee moved to Juichin; Wang Ming sent as delegate to Moscow; beginning of the USSR's Second Five Year Plan (1932–37).

1933: 2 May—On appeal Roy's sentence reduced to six year's rigorous imprisonment.

1933: Adolf Hitler became Dictator of Germany; F. D. Roosevelt elected President of the United States; end of the Great Depression and beginning of Roosevelt's New Deal.

1934: Civil Disobedience called off by the Congress; the Indian Factories Act. The Fourth International announced by Trotsky; beginning of the Long March in China (October).

1935: Seventh Congress of the Communist International (25 July – 20 August): New Policy of United Front or People's Front; Italy's attack on Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Government of India Act, 1935.

1936: Victory of the Popular Front in Spain (February) and in France (June); outbreak of Civil War in Spain (June); German-Italian Pact; New Soviet Constitution; the First Moscow Trial (among the accused were Zinoviev, Kamenev and Smirnov).

1931: July – 20 November 1936 —Roy's jail period of 5 years and 4 months was spent first in Kanpur jail, then in Bareilly, Almorah and Dehradun jails; in spite of severe restrictions, he managed to keep in touch with his radical associates in India and abroad by smuggling out letters, instructions and articles; many of his articles were published under various assumed names in a number of periodicals; several of his radical associates became leading members of the Congress Socialist Party (founded 1934) and his *Letters to the Congress Socialist Party*, written and smuggled out in 1934, 1935 and 1936, were published as a book in 1937; his letters to Ellen Gottschalk were published subsequently as a book in 1943 under the title *Letters from jail*; some of his loyal supporters in the Indian Trade Union movement consolidated their position in the All-India Trade Union Congress; the Communist International and Communists in India, however, conducted a violent vilification campaign against Roy; the change of official Comintern policy from the extreme leftism of the Sixth Congress to the 'United Front' line of the Seventh Congress was not reflected at all in the Communist attitude and behaviour to Roy; in jail Roy occupied himself with systematic and extensive studies in philosophy, history and physical and social sciences, and wrote down his reflections on sheets of paper which grew into nine large manuscript volumes; selected portions from these manuscripts were published in book form after his release from jail (e.g., *Fascism; The Historical Role of Islam; Heresies of the Twentieth Century; India's Message; Materialism; Science and Superstition*, etc.), but the 'Prison Manuscripts' as a whole have not been published; they are currently preserved in the M. N. Roy Archives of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

1936: 20 November—Roy released from jail.

November–December—Elected member of All-India Congress Committee; attended as a delegate the Faizpur Session of the Congress; spoke about developing Congress Primary Committees as organs of struggle against imperialism and for social justice, and about the Congress functioning as the Constituent Assembly.

1937: February–March—Elections to Provincial Assemblies held under the Govt. of India Act of 1935; Roy toured extensively in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

4 March—Ellen Gottschalk joined Roy in Bombay.

10 March—Ellen and M. N. Roy got married.

4 April—Publication of *Independent India* weekly from Bombay under Roy's editorship.

April–August—'Royists' resigned from the Congress Socialist Party.

1937: Congress Ministries formed in Bihar, Orissa, U. P., Bombay and Madras. Japan's attack on China; uneasy front of Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party under Chiang Kai-

Shek's leadership; the 'Great Purge' of the Bolshevik 'Old Guard' continued in the USSR under Stalin (among the accused were Radek, Piatakov and Sokolnikov). Publication of *The Russian Revolution: a review and perspective; The Historical Role of Islam.*

1937–38: Roy travelled and lectured extensively in both North and South India advocating the need for an alternative democratic and modern leadership within the Congress which would be committed to full independence and agrarian revolution; presided over Youth Conference in U. P. (May, 1937) and Madras (July, 1937), over Agricultural Labourers' Conference in Andhra (August); visited Bengal (January, 1938) after 23 years; finally decided to establish his headquarters in Dehradun (1938).

1938: Congress ministry in Assam. Hitler occupied Austria; Munich Pact; betrayal of Czechoslovakia by Britain and France to Germany in the hope that Nazi aggression would be directed towards the Soviet Union and not towards the West; Anglo-French appeasement policy severely attacked by Roy; the Terror continued in the Soviet Union by Stalin with many thousands of victims in the party leadership and the Army (among the accused were Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda, Krestinsky and Rakovsky).

1938: Publication of *Our Differences*; *My Experience in China*; *Fascism*; *Congress and Kisan*.

1939: January–December—Repeated warnings in Roy's speeches and writings against fascism in Europe and fascist forces and trends in India.

March—Congress Session at Tripuri; right wing Congress leaders refused to co-operate with Congress President Subash Chandra Bose; Roy proposed to Bose that the President should constitute his own Working Committee; Bose fumbled while the right wing got a resolution moved and passed which required the new Working Committee to have Gandhi's approval; Roy and his radical supporters decided to form a body within the Congress which would provide a modern and democratic alternative leadership to Gandhi's.

April–June—Resignation of Subash Bose and election of Rajendra Prasad as President; formation of the League of Radical Congressmen (1 May); first All-India Conference of the League under Roy's Presidentship in Poona (27–28 June).

August—Nazi-Soviet Pact; Roy argued that the Pact had been forced on Russia by the Anglo-French appeasement policy and it would be shortlived since Nazi Germany's raison d'etre was to serve as an instrument of England and France for the destruction of the Soviet Union.

September—German invasion of Poland and outbreak of Second World War.

October—Roy's thesis on 'India and War' adopted by LRC; it considered the war at this stage to be neither 'anti-fascist' nor 'imperialist' but 'internecine' having alternative possibilities; however, it clearly rejected the line of 'war resistance in the countries involved in a war against Hitlerism' as that 'will reduce the chances of the defeat of Nazi Germany'.

October-November—Resignation of Congress ministries in the provinces; preparations started for Satyagraha under Gandhi's leadership; Muslim League observed 'Deliverance Day' (December).

November—Comintern Executive's Manifesto of 11 November characterizing the war as 'an imperialist war' and asking Communist Parties to oppose the war.

December—Publication of Mao Tse-Tung's *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*.

1939: Publication of Roy's book; *Heresies of the Twentieth Century*.

1940: March—Roy contested election to Congress Presidentship; defeated. 'Pakistan Resolution' passed by the Muslim League at Lahore.

April—Gandhi asked every Congress Committee to be converted into a Satyagraha Committee and every Satyagrahi to sign a pledge.

April-May—Nazi occupation of Denmark, Norway, Belgium and Netherlands.

May—Summer Study Camp of LRC at Dehradun (Roy's lectures at the Camp subsequently published as a book in 1942 under the title *Scientific Politics*); the concept of 'Twentieth Century Jacobinism' and the implications of anti-fascism developed.

June—Nazi occupation of France.

August—War characterized by Roy as 'anti-fascist war'.

September—Anti-fascist meetings and demonstrations organized in different parts of India by LRC; Roy suspended by the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee from all elective positions in the Congress.

October—Meeting of LRC Central Executive in Meerut; decision taken to break with the Congress and form a separate political party which would support the anti-fascist war and work for 'the programme of National Freedom and Social Emancipation'. Individual satyagraha started by Congress.

20–22 December—Inauguration of the Radical Democratic Party.

1940: Publication of Roy's books *The Alternative*; *Materialism*; *Science and Superstition*; *Letters to the Mahatma*; *Gandhism, Nationalism and Socialism; From Savagery to Civilization*.

1941: Roy travelled throughout India addressing public meetings and local units of the RDP.

22 June: Hitler attacked the Soviet Union; Communist parties were told by the Communist International to support Great Britain in the war against Fascism.

June—Roy's letter to the British Labour Party.

July—Roy's proposal to the General Council of All-India Trade Union Congress to support the war; his proposal opposed not only by the nationalists but also by the Indian Communist leaders who had not yet received Comintern instructions and who maintained that war between Britain and Germany was imperialist but war between Germany and Russia was anti-fascist; Roy and his supporters decided to form a separate anti-fascist all-India trade union organization.

October—Comintern headquarters removed to Ufa.

November—Indian Federation of Labour founded in Lahore with Roy as General Secretary. Stalin's speech on 'the Great Patriotic War' of the U.S.S.R.

December—All-India Anti-Fascist Students' Conference at Delhi. America declared war on Japan; Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S.A.; Soviet Union, Britain and the U.S.A. became allies in the war against Fascist powers; Moscow's instruction at last reached the leaders of the Communist Party of India and the CPI became war-supporters.

1942: February—Fall of Singapore.

March—Fall of Rangoon.

March–April—Cripps Mission and its failure.

August—'Quit India' movement launched by Gandhi.

December—Second Conference of the Radical Democratic Party held at Lucknow.

January to December—Roy's speeches and articles in *Independent India* and other periodicals explaining the notion of People's War and the methods of guerrilla warfare in case of Japanese invasion of India; publication of Roy's books: *Freedom or Fascism; War and Revolution; Scientific Politics; India and War*.

1943: February—German Army's capitulation at Stalingrad.

15 May—Comintern Presidium announced 'dissolution' of the Communist International; Stalin explained that 'this will result in a further strengthening of the United Front of the Allies'.

August—Bengal Famine which killed off millions of people.

December—IFL Conference at Bombay; Committee set up to draft a Plan of Economic Development based on Roy's ideas on social and economic reconstruction.

December—Independent Government formed in Yugoslavia by Communists under Tito's leadership.

1943: Head Office of the Radical Democratic Party and the periodical *Independent India* moved to Delhi; RDP London office opened with A. K. Pillai in charge.

1943: Publication of Roy's books: *Communist International*; *Nationalism an Antiquated Cult*; *Indian Labour and Post-War Reconstruction*; *Nationalism, Democracy and Freedom; Poverty or Plenty?; Letters from Jail*; *National Government or People's Government*?

1944: April–May—Publication of *People's Plan* and its adoption by a special conference held at Jharia.

July—RDP Manifesto demanding General Elections, Universal Suffrage and Responsible Government.

September—Breakdown of Gandhi-Jinnah talks over issue of Pakistan; Roy proposed a federal democratic Indian Republic and prepared a draft Constitution of Free India.

October—Roy's message to British Trade Union Congress to build an Indo-British democratic alliance against Fascism.

December—IFL Conference at Jamshedpur; Maniben Kara elected President, V. B. Karnik General Secretary; Calcutta Conference of RDP; release of *Constitution of India, a Draft*, prepared by Roy, for public discussion.

1944: Publication of Roy's books: *Alphabet of Fascist Economics; Planning a New India, Indian Renaissance Movement*.

1945: May—German surrender.

June—Release of Congress leaders from prison.

June–July—Simla Conference and its failure.

July—Elections in Britain; Labour under Attlee's leadership voted to office.

August—Japanese surrender.

October—Spread of Kuomintang-Communist conflict over large area of China.

November—INA trials in Red Fort, Delhi.

December—Election on the basis of a very limited (3 p.c.) franchise to the Central Legislative Assembly; Muslim League under Jinnah's leadership won every Muslim seat and proved itself to be the second most powerful political party in India.

1945: Publication of Roy's books: *Problem of Freedom; Constitution of India, a Draft;* also publication of *The Marxian Way* quarterly under Roy's editorship with the collaboration of Sudhindrananth Datta (July 1945); also publication of *Last Battles of Freedom* (Report of the 1944 RDP Conference).

1946: Elections on a limited franchise (13 p.c.) to the Provincial Legislatures reconfirmed the Congress and the League as the two major political parties; Radical candidates defeated in the elections; throughout 1945–46, Roy warned repeatedly in his writings and speeches against the manner in which politico-economic power was being transferred from British to Indian vested interests without any social revolution and without benefit to the majority of the Indian people; he also expressed his complete disillusionment with the Soviet Union which had shown itself to be totalitarian, chauvinistic, exploitative and imperialist.

1946: March–June—British Cabinet Mission in India.

8–18 May—RDP Study Camp; Roy placed before the Camp his 'New Orientation', which clearly rejected both bourgeois liberalism and Marxism, and proposed Radicalism as his alternative philosophy; some of the central ideas of radical humanism emerged in the course of lectures and discussions during this Study Camp.

June—Publication of the first complete English edition of Roy's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China.*

July—Conflict between Nehru and Jinnah over interpretation of Cabinet Mission's constitutional plan; the Muslim League's call for 'Direct Action'.

August—Foundation of the Indian Renaissance Institute at Dehradun with Roy as Founder-Director; large-scale communal riots and killings in Calcutta following upon the League's call for 'Direct Action'.

September–October—Interim Government formed at first by Congress and then in October joined by the Muslim League.

October–November—Draft of the 'Theses on Radical Democracy' circulated, and amendments and additions incorporated.

December—Constituent Assembly met without the Muslim League; RDP Conference at Bombay; adoption of 'Twenty-Two Theses' or 'Principles of Radical Democracy'.

1946: Publication of Roy's books: *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China, INA and the August Revolution; New Orientation; Jawaharlal Nehru;* also Publication of *Radicalism: philosophy of democratic revolution* by S. N. Ray with 'Introduction' by M. N. Roy.

1947: March–April—Asian Relations Conference at New Delhi; Roy's Manifesto to the Conference delegates 'Asia and the World'; Mountbatten as Viceroy.

April–June—The plan for partition of India accepted by Congress, League and the Sikh leaders.

May—Summer Study Camp of Radicals at Dehradun; Draft Manifesto of New Humanism presented by Roy and approved by the Central Political Council of RDP.

August—Indian sub-continent partitioned; India and Pakistan become independent; communal riots, large-scale killings and mass migration took place in both States; RDP issued a manifesto 'Forward to Freedom', emphasizing that political independence was only a phase in the continuing struggle for freedom of the people and for social justice.

September—Cominform established by Moscow; Andrei Zhdanov announced 'Cold War' and militant left line at Cominform's first session in Poland.

December—Full-scale civil war in China between the Kuomintang and the Communists.

1947: Publication of Roy's books: *Beyond Communism* (with Philip Spratt); *New Humanism, a Manifesto*; *Science and Philosophy*.

1948: January—Assassination of Gandhi.

February—*Independent India* weekly transferred to Bombay; Roy's tribute to Gandhi 'The Message of the Martyr' published in *Independent India*; Eastern Regional Study Camp at Uttarpara, West Bengal; Roy's visit and lectures at Dhaka. Communist Coup in Czechoslovakia.

February-March—Communist Party of India adopted the Zhdanov insurrectionary militant left line.

May—Summer School of Higher Studies of the Indian Renaissance Institute; Roy began developing the idea that political parties were incompatible with radical democracy, that for a renaissance movement and democratic revolution, a political party was an unsuitable institution.

June—Communist Yugoslovia under Tito broke ties with the Soviet Union.

August—Publication of *In Man's Own Image* by Ellen Roy and Sibnarayan Ray with foreword by M.N. Roy.

September—Communist insurrectionary activities in Andhra and West Bengal; Indian Government's police action in Hyderabad; death of Jinnah. Gomulka, Communist leader of Poland, removed from office by Stalin.

December—Calcutta Conference of RDP decided to dissolve the party and develop the Indian Radical Humanist Movement; Theses 19 and 20 of 'Principles of Radical Democracy' and last three paragraphs of *New Humanism* manifesto were accordingly amended.

1948: Intensification of 'cold war' between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union; Roy's sustained criticism of both superpowers and opposition to any involvement in 'cold war'.

1949: April—Name of *Independent India* weekly changed to *The Radical Humanist* weekly.

May–June—Indian Renaissance Institute Summer Camp for Higher Studies at Mussoorie; very detailed discussion of the philosophical implications of Radical Humanism.

August—Name of *The Marxian Way* quarterly changed to *The Humanist Way*.

October—Mao Tse-Tung proclaimed the People's Republic of China; Chiang Kai-Shek moved the Kuomintang government to Taiwan.

November—Formal adoption of the Constitution of the Indian Republic.

1949: Publication of the very substantially enlarged edition of *The Russian Revolution* incorporating the earlier book published under that title in 1937 plus his writings on the Soviet Union and the Communist International during the forties, thus giving a 'record of my reactions to contemporary events in the process of unfolding'; also started writing his 'Memoirs'.

1950: January—Constitution of India came into force; Cominform line changed from insurrectionary leftism to anti-American 'United-Front'; however the CPI, torn and paralyzed by internal dissensions, did not change its tactical line till mid–1951, when its election manifesto (August) marked the beginning of 'constitutional communism', and the unconditional surrender of Telangana insurrectionists (October) ended the extremist phase.

February—Sino-Soviet Treaty.

February—Radical Humanist Study Camp at West Bengal.

June—Outbreak of Korean War; Roy's Writings criticizing both the Soviet Union and the United States for their policies and action.

October—Chinese Communist troops entered Tibet.

1950: Publication: *India's Message*.

1951: February—First All-India National Convention of Indian Radical Humanist Movement.

May—*The Radical Humanist* weekly moved from Bombay to Calcutta.

1951: First Five-Year Plan inaugurated; Roy's critique of the Plan approach; series of Roy's writings in various periodicals and *The Radical Humanist* on Communism in Asia and on his recollections of prominent political contemporaries in Asia and Europe; also he worked on the manuscript of his magnum opus, 'Reason, Romanticism and Revolution', and his 'Memoirs'; contact established with several Humanist organizations in Europe and the U.S.A.

1952: January—Roy's article on 'Communism in Asia' in *Pacific Affairs* reprinted in *The Radical Humanist*; also Roy's article on 'Indian Communists and Elections' in the *Manchester Guardian*.

February–March—First General Elections in India on the basis of adult franchise; Congress in full control of Central and State Governments.

April—*Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* completed; plans for the Inaugural Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union announced, with the Indian Radical Humanist Movement as one of its foundation-members; Roy invited to play a major role in the Congress; preparation started for his travels and lecture tour in Europe and the United States.

11 June—A serious accident in Mussoorie; Roy fell fifty feet down while walking along a hill-track; he was moved to Dehradun for treatment.

August—First volume of *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* published; International Humanist and Ethical Union established at its first Congress in Amsterdam; Roy elected, in absentia, as one of its Vice-Presidents.

25 August—First attack of cerebral thrombosis resulting in a partial paralysis of Roy's right side.

November–December—Slow and gradual recovery; resumed reading, dictating articles to Ellen, even occasional writing of correspondence and short articles.

1952: Publications: *Radical Humanism*; *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*, Volume I.

1953: January–February—Publication of Roy's articles in *The Radical Humanist* resumed: New Year's Message, 'Our Creed', 'Indo-Pakistan Relations and Middle East Defence Organisation'.

February—First instalment of Roy's *Memoirs* published in *The Radical Humanist* under title 'The Quest of Golden Fleece' (1 February).

March—Stalin's death: Roy's tribute to Stalin (*The Radical Humanist* 15 March); article 'Stalinism survives Stalin' (*The Radical Humanist*, 26 April).

May—Plans made again for Roy's lecture tour in the U.S.A. in October.

June—Strikes and riots in East Germany.

August—Second attack of cerebral thrombosis; left side paralyzed.

August—Armistice in Korea.

December—Nehru visited Roy at Dehradun; signs of recovery; dictated article for *The Radical Humanist* on the Movement and its organization.

December—Collectivization of agriculture started in China.

1954: 24 January—Roy's last article as dictated by him to Ellen published in *The Radical Humanist*.

25 January—Last and final attack; death at ten minutes before midnight.

September—Last instalment of *Memoirs* ('Communists Among Themselves') published in *The Radical Humanist*.

1955: May—Second Volume of *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* published.

1956–58: Organization of M. N. Roy Archives of the Indian Renaissance Institute by Ellen Roy.

1957: Publication of *Crime and Karma*; *Cats and Women*.

1960: April—Publication of *Politics, Power and Parties* (lectures and essays 1947–52 edited by Ellen Roy).

14 December—Death of Ellen Roy.

1964: Publication of Roy's *Memoirs* in one volume.

1968: Publication of *Men I Met* (posthumous compilation of sketches, some of them already published in journals, others taken from the MNR Archives).

1987: Publication of the Centenary Edition of the *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Volume 1.

SELECTED WORKS

1923

1. From *One Year of Non-Cooperation from Ahmedabad to Gaya*.
2. From *The Vanguard* Vol. II.
3. From *The Vanguard* Vol. III.

Selections from

One Year of Non-Cooperation

From Ahmedabad to Gaya

By
MANABENDRA NATH ROY
and
EVELYN ROY

Published by
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA
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Introduction

Now that the Non-cooperation Movement based upon the doctrine of *Satyagraha* is a thing of the past, it will not be without a wholesome lesson to look at it with a historical retrospect. We are certainly not ignorant of the fact that there are not a few in India even now, who will vehemently protest against the assertion that the Non-cooperation Movement is dead. We also know of those who still cling to the illusion of 'spiritualizing politics' and believe that the 'special genius' of India will carve out a path of progress for her people, a path which will be distinct from that followed by the other nations of the world. Nevertheless, the reality cannot be made non-existent by utopian desires, nor by the explicable anxiety of those chary in admitting a defeat.

Non-cooperation as a political force is dead. We make this assertion, not today, when there are few serious-minded people who do not subscribe to the same view. To us, the collapse of Non-cooperation was a foregone conclusion. Ever since its inauguration, we have been telling that it would succumb to its own contradictions. We have said so even in those days when its success appeared to be imminent. When it was at the height of its glory, we exposed its fallacies and criticized the doctrines on which it was based. In spite of the highest esteem for the personality of its prophet, we never hesitated to point out the true significance of his philosophy. In short, we committed the sacrilege of questioning the wisdom of the Mahatma while the multitude was worshipping him. The object of the following pages is to remind our countrymen that, while drunk with the over-exaggerated estimate of their own wisdom, they have been but chasing a will-o'-the wisp, there was a voice which endeavoured to call them back to reality. For more than a year, ours was a voice crying in the Wilderness. But history has justified our standpoint. The Non-cooperation Movement has fallen victim to its own contradictions. Gandhism has proved to be of no avail in politics. Its socio-economic philosophy stands with failure writ across it.

What is desired to be shown in the following pages is not individual wisdom. On the contrary, they contain a trenchant criticism of subjectivism, which has been the greatest weakness of the Non-cooperation Movement, a phenomenon brought about, as any other historical event, by objective causes. The philosophy of Non-cooperation was fed with the cult of Inspiration. It was hero-worship. It sunk so deeply in the morass of this deplorable subjectivism that the vision of the forces impelling it was altogether lost. The leaders of Non-cooperation believed that they could lead the movement, not according to the dictates of the objective forces that gave it birth, but to suit their own desires. In short, the leaders conspired against the very forces that had created them. The object of the following pages is to show that those who knew how to subordinate personality, however great it might be, to the objective conditions were correct. They alone could have a right perspective on the situation, even in those days when events were succeeding each other with bewildering rapidity.

We point out the collapse of Non-cooperation, neither with the relief of the Government nor with the satisfaction of the Liberals. Our object is entirely different. In the past, we indicated its mistakes and criticized its wrong philosophy only with the intention that the movement might grow stronger by rescuing itself from these causes of weakness. Today we hold up a picture of the past year, in order to show that our criticism was right. We do so only with the object of demonstrating the potentiality of a certain method of socio-political reasoning which we have always sought to introduce into the Indian movement. According to this, the political movement in India is neither the expression of a spiritual awakening, nor the creation of some superman, nor a gigantic wave destined to sweep the world clean of material civilization. *The Indian movement is the outcome of a great social upheaval brought about by changed economic conditions*. It is the result of a popular unrest, created not by the insults and indignities of foreign rule, but by a dynamic process of social readjustment. It is a movement, not backward towards a mythical Golden Age which never existed, but forward, to conquer more comfort, more enjoyment, more freedom for the human animal. This being the essence of the movement, its direction should be inspired with the same vision. Leaders who consciously focus these objective forces are alone capable of leading this great movement of social regeneration, which militates with the immediate object of national liberation. Unmindful of these dynamic causes, and pretending to create history by their own personality and wisdom, even the greatest of leaders are mercilessly discarded by the inexorable operation of the same agencies that brought them into being.

This imperious law of Economic Determinism is equally applicable everywhere. India is not immune from it. The Non-cooperation Movement was subject to it, but the leaders of the Non-cooperation Movement were utterly oblivious of it. They acted contrary to it,—hence their defeat. Their followers accepted their doctrine as gospel truth. Every voice of reason was condemned as blasphemy or heresy. The great movement was cramped within the narrow limits of subjectivism. Therefore the present deplorable situation. As soon as the clay feet of the god were discovered, the worshippers were totally discomfited; but they were not in a position to mark out a new way. So they settled down to a period of degeneration, deceiving themselves all the while with high-sounding phrases and with a picture of an imaginary victory which would be theirs before long.

The contradictions inherent in the Non-cooperation campaign and the inevitable collapse resulting therefrom, were palpable to those able to read events in the light of Historic Materialism. Such a reading of the Non-cooperation Movement is contained in the following pages. They include the unmasking of a reactionary philosophy masquerading in the bewitching garb of Spirituality; a criticism of fallacious economic theories; an indication of grave tactical blunders; and above all, repeated warnings of the inevitable defeat which was sure to follow such a philosophy and such methods.

The contents of the present book are of historical value, in that they vindicate the correctness of the social outlook, economic theories and political principles held by our party. They are written over the period of more than a year, and deal with almost all the critical stages of the Non-coöperation campaign. In spite of their publication at various times, in various forms and through various means, a uniform line of reasoning, a uniform method of interpreting events runs through them, thus giving them the character of a comprehensive picture of a given historical epoch. The warning given to the Congress in the Manifesto issued on the eve of the Ahmedabad session was not heeded. The present plight of Non-cooperation will convince all honest revolutionaries of the correctness of that warning, which in the meantime opened the eyes of not a few who have infused vigour into the movement in some way or other. The collapse of Non-cooperation to us does not mean a defeat of the Indian National Struggle, not even a weakening of it. On the contrary, it signifies the development of the revolutionary forces whose first confused expression was the Non-cooperation Movement. We only intend to show in the light of historical experience that it was possible only for Marxian materialists to see through this confusion, and point out to sincere revolutionaries the solid bedrock on which the movement was reared.

The Marxian analysis of the socio-economic character of the Non-cooperation Movement and our repeated assertion that Non-cooperation was a reactionary movement were clearly vindicated by the hostility with which the Programme of National Liberation and Reconstruction, prepared by the Indian Communist Party for the consideration of the Gaya Congress, was looked upon by the entire Non-cooperation press. The reaction to this programme clarified the situation so much that the Congress was forced to throw down the mask of its super-class character, a mask which, with the help of the hypocritical cant of 'spiritual culture', befogged the vision of many a revolutionary objectively free from all class-affiliation. Our social philosophy teaches us to look for class-antagonism behind all political movements. It holds—not dogmatically but by virtue of the positive knowledge of social sciences—that material necessities give origin everywhere to variegated social customs and institutions; that human development all over the globe follows a uniform line modified but secondarily by local conditions; that social evolution and political awakening are determined by the stage of economic development of a particular people, and that the essence of the life of the human animal is an eternal struggle with the forces of nature, which overwhelm him in the primitive stages, but are conquered by him as he goes on evolving higher means of production. Every political movement is fundamentally a socio-economic struggle; therefore, it is determined consciously or unconsciously by the above law. The urge behind our national struggle is essentially material; therefore, the only way by which it can be rescued from the degenerating consequences of Non-cooperation is to invigorate it with a revolutionary ideology commensurate with its genesis.

The history of the great failure of Non-cooperation, as recorded from the point of view of Historic Materialism, will help the revolutionary elements in the Indian society to crystallize this much-needed revolutionary ideology. A Marxian reading of our struggle will reveal to these revolutionaries many things that are not to be held within the compass of the philosophy maintained by them hitherto. It will help them to be more of realists and less of Utopians. It will give them an impetus to look at our movement from a new angle of vision. It is with this confidence that the following collection of the most important manifestoes, articles, programmes etc. written from the Marxian standpoint, is presented to the Indian public. Those chapters previously published are supplemented by new ones written in order to make the book a complete history of a given period.

One year of Non-cooperation,—from Ahmedabad to Gaya. What has been the achievement? Let the history recorded in the following pages answer this question. Why is the movement, that drove fear into the heart of the Government on the eve of Ahmedabad, prostrate, disheartened and impotent today? What has happened during these twelve months to make such a difference in the spirit, enthusiasm and determination of the Indian people? One must read history to answer these pertinent questions, a frank and courageous reply to which will enable us to find a new way, to rally our forces again and to give battle to the enemy with renewed vigour, which will not be evoked by a less ephemeral stimulus.

The answers to these questions will be found in the following pages. To sumarize: at Ahmedabad, we found the Congress terrified at the mighty hosts rallied under its banner. The leadership was proven too conservative, too non-revolutionary, too timid to guide the army at its command. All it could do was to temporize, hoping that the acuteness of the situation would subside, thus relieving it of the unwelcome revolutionary burden. Under the pressure of class interests, the leaders condemned the action of the masses, and thus the Congress in reality was divorced from the dynamic forces of revolution. The Government was not slow in seizing upon the weakness which had been always innate, but not revealed. It came down with the heavy hand of repression. As if to give encouragement to the policy of repression, the Bardoli Resolutions were passed under the personal supervision of the High Priest of Non-cooperation. What followed was simple. It was a prolonged funeral to the spirit of Non-cooperation killed at Bardoli.

This partly romantic, partly tragic drama was staged on the background of the conflict of class-interests. The class-conflict was so fierce that even the Mahatma himself was not spared. But he had done his work. Perhaps unconsciously, he had sacrificed the Non-cooperation Movement on the twin altars of Landlordism and Industrialism, the latter of which he so heartily hated. This is the lesson of the last year of Non-coopertion. To learn this lesson, not to ignore a disagreeable reality on the pretext of a fictitious 'spiritual civilization', and to apply the experience gained from the failure of this year, will be of great value for the future of our movement.

April, 1923

Manabendra Nath Roy

CHAPTER I

Manifesto to the 36th Indian National Congress, Ahmedabad, 1921

Fellow Countrymen!

You have met in a very critical moment of the history of our country to decide various questions affecting gravely the future of the national life and progress. The Indian nation today stands on the eve of a great revolution, not only political, but economic and social as well. The vast mass of humanity, which inhabits the great peninsula, has begun to move towards a certain goal; it is awakening after centuries of social stagnation resulting from economic and political oppression. The National Congress has placed itself at the head of this movement. Yours is a very difficult task, and the way before you is beset with obstacles almost insuperable and pitfalls treacherous and troublesome. The mission of leading the people of India onward to the goal of national liberation is great, and you have made this great mission your own. The National Congress is no longer a holiday gathering engaged in idle debates and futile resolution-making; it has become a political body—the leader of the movement for national liberation.

This newly acquired political importance obliges the Congress to change its philosophical background. It must cease to be a subjective body; its deliberations and decisions should be determined by the objective conditions prevailing, and not according to the notions, desires and prejudices of its leaders. It was so when the Congress, national in name only, was the political organ which expressed the opinions and aspirations of a small group of men who ruled over it. If the old Congress dominated by the Mehta-Gokhale-Bose-Banerji combination is dead and discarded from the field of pragmatic politics, it is because those men wanted to build a nation after their own image; they did not and could not take into consideration the material they had to work with; they failed to feel the pulse of the people; they knew what *they* thought and wanted, but they did not know, neither did they care to know, what the *people*,—the people which constituted that nation which their Congress also pretended to represent—needed for its welfare, for its progress. *The old Congress landed in political bankruptcy because it could not make the necessities of the common* *people its own*; it took for granted that its demands for administrative and fiscal reforms reflected the interests of the man in the street; the 'grand old men' of the Moderate Party believed that intellect and learning were their inviolable mandates for the leadership of the nation. This lamentable subjectivism, originating from defective or total absence of understanding of the social forces that underlie and give strength to all movements, made the venerable fathers of Indian Nationalism betray their own child; and it led them to their own ruin, disgrace and political death. You, leaders of the new Congress, should be careful not to make the same mistake because the same mistake will lead to the same disaster.

The programme of the Congress under the leadership of the Non-cooperation Party is to attain Swaraj within the shortest possible time. It has discarded the old impotent tactics of securing petty reforms by means of constitutional agitation. Proudly and determinedly, the Congress has raised the standard with 'Swaraj within a Year' written on it. Under this banner, the people of India are invited to unite; holding this banner high you exhort them to march forward till the goal is reached. This is indeed a noble cause. It is but natural that the people of India should fight for the right of ruling themselves. But the function of the Congress, as leader of the nation, is not only to point out the goal, but to lead the people step by step towards the goal. From its activities of the last year, it is apparent that the Congress understands its task and is trying to find the best way of executing it. The people must be infused with enthusiasm to fight for Swaraj; they must be united in this struggle, because without union the goal will not be attained.

Why was the old Congress discredited? *Because it could not make the national question a vital problem for the people*. Under the old leaders, the Congress was caught in the cesspool of political pedantry and petty reformism. Not much greater results can be expected if these are to be replaced by abstract idealism and political confusion. In order to deserve the name and to be able to execute the difficult task set before it, the National Congress must not permit itself to be carried away by the sentiment and idealism of a handful of individuals however great and patriotic they may be; it must take into consideration the cold material facts; it must survey with keenness the everyday life of the people,—their wants and sufferings. Our is not a mere political game; it is a great social struggle.

The greatest problem before the 36th Congress is how to enlist the full-hearted support of the people in the national cause,—how to make the ignorant masses follow the banner of Swaraj. In order to solve this problem, the first thing necessary is to know what is it that ails the masses. What do they want? What is needed for improving the immediate environment of their material existence? Because *only by including the redress of their immediate grievances in its programme will the Congress be able to assume the practical leadership of the masses of the people*.

Several thousand noisy, irresponsible students and a number of middle-class intellectuals, followed by an ignorant mob momentarily incited by fanaticism, cannot be the social basis of the political organ of a nation. The toiling masses in the cities, the dumb millions in the villages must be brought into the ranks of the movement if it is to be potential. How to realize this mass organization is the vital problem before the Congress. How can the man working in the factories or labouring on the fields be convinced that national independence will put an end to his sufferings? Is it not a fact that hundreds of thousands of workers employed in the mills and factories owned by rich Indians, not a few of whom are leaders of the national movement, live in a condition unbearable and are treated in a manner revolting? Of course by prudent people such discomforting questions would be hushed in the name of the national cause. The argument of these politicians is 'let us get rid of the foreign domination first'. Such cautious political acumen may be flattering to the upper classes; but *the poor workers and peasants are hungry. If they are to be led on to fight, it must be for the betterment of their material condition*. The slogan which will correspond to the interest of the majority of the population and consequently will electrify them with enthusiasm to fight consciously, is '*land to the peasant and bread to the worker*'. The abstract doctrine of national self-determination leaves them passive; personal charms create enthusiasm loose and passing.

How can the Congress expect to arouse lasting popular enthusiasm in the name of the Khilafat and by demanding the revision of the treaty of Sèvres? The high politics behind such slogans may be easy for the learned intellectuals to understand; but it is beyond the comprehension of the masses of Indian people, who have been steeped in ignorance not only by the foreign ruler, but by our own religious and social institutions. Such propaganda based on the questionable doctrine of utilizing the ignorance of the masses in order to make them do the bidding of the Congress, cannot be expected to produce the desired result. If the masses of the Indian people are to be drawn into the struggle for national freedom, it will not be done by exploiting their ignorance. *Their consciousness must be aroused first of all. They must know what they are fighting for. And the cause for which they fight must include their immediate needs*. What does the man in the street need? The only aspiration of his life is to get two meals a day, which he hardly achieves. And such are the people who constitute 90 per cent of the nation. Therefore, it is evident that any movement not based on the interests of these masses cannot be of any lasting importance or of formidable power.

The programme of the Congress has to be denuded of all sentimental trimmings; it should be dragged down from the heights of abstract idealism; it must talk of the things indispensable for the mortal life of the common human being; it must echo the modest aspirations of the toiling masses; the object for which the Indian people will fight should not be looked for somewhere in the unknown regions of Mesopotamia or Arabia or Constantinople; it should be found in their immediate surroundings, in their huts, on the land, in the factory. Hungry mortals cannot bc expected to fight indefinitely for an abstract ideal. The Congress must not always urge the people, which can be called the classical example of suffering and sacrifice personified, to suffer and sacrifice only. *The first signs of the end of their age-long suffering should be brought within their vision. They should be helped in their economic fight. The Congress can no longer defer the formulation of a definite programme of economic and social reconstruction. The formulation of such a constructive programme advocating the redress of the immediate grievances of the suffering masses, demanding the improvement of their present miserable condition, is the principal task of the 36th Congress.*

Mr Gandhi was right in declaring that 'the Congress must cease to be a debating society of talented lawyers', but if it is to be, as he prescribes in the same breath, an organ of the 'merchants and manufacturers', no change will have been made in its character, in so far as the interests of the majority of the people are concerned. It will not be any more national that its predecessor. It will not meet any more dignified end. If it is to represent and defend the interest of one class viz. the merchants and manufacturers, it cannot but fail to take care of that of the common people. *The inevitable consequence of this failure will be divorce of the Congress from the majority of the nation.* The merchants and manufacturers alone cannot lead the national struggle to a successful end; neither will the intellectuals and petty shop-keepers add any appreciable strength to the movement. What is indispensable is the mass-energy: *the country can be free, Swaraj can be realized, only with the conscious action of the masses of the people.* In order to be able to execute its task, *the Congress must know how to awaken the mass energy, how to lead the masses to the field of resolute action.* But the tactics of the Congress betray its lamentable indifference to and lack of understanding of the popular interest. The Congress proposes to exploit the ignorance of the people and expects them to follow its lead blindly. This cannot happen. If the leader remains indifferent to the interests of the follower, the two will soon fall asunder. The masses are awakening; they are showing signs of vigour; they are signifying their readiness to fight for their own interests; the programme of using them as mere instruments, which are to be kept in their proper place, will soon prove ineffective. *If the Congress makes the mistake of becoming the political apparatus of the propertied class, it must forfeit the title to the leadership of the nation.* Unfailing social forces are constantly at work; they will make the workers and peasants conscious of their economic and social interests, and ere long the latter will develop their own political party, which refuses to be led astray by the upper-class politicians.

Non-cooperation cannot unify the nation. If we dare to look the facts in the face, *it has failed. It is bound to fail because it does not take the economic laws into consideration. The only social class in whose hand Non-cooperation can prove to be a powerful weapon, that is the working-class, has not only been left out of the programme, but the prophet of Non-cooperation himself declared 'it is dangerous to make political use of the factory workers'.* So the only element, which on account of its socio-economic position, could make Non-cooperation a success is left out. The reason is not hard to find; the defenders of the interests of the merchants and manufacturers betray unconsciously their apprehension lest wage-earners should be encouraged to question the right of exploitation conceded to the propertied class by all respectable society. *The other classes which are called upon to non-cooperate, being dependent economically on the present system, cannot separate themselves from it,* even if it is damned as 'satanic' by the highest authorities.

Non-cooperation may prove to be a suitable weapon to fight, or better said, to embarrass the foreign bureaucracy, but at best, it is merely destructive. The possible end of foreign domination, in itself, is not a sufficient inducement for the people at large. They should be told in clear terms what benefit would accrue to them from the establishment of Swaraj. They should be convinced that national autonomy will help them solve the problem of physical existence. Neither will empty phrases and vague promises serve the purpose; *it has to be demonstrated by the acts of the Congress that it proposes to achieve the amelioration of the people's suffering, and that it will not neglect the immediate needs of the workers in quest of abstract freedom to be realized at some future date.*

For the defence and furtherance of the interests of the native manufacturers, the programme of Swadeshi and boycott is plausible. It may succeed in harming the British capitalist class and thus bring an indirect pressure on the British Government, *though, being based on wrong economics, the chances of its ultimate success are very problematical. But as a slogan for uniting the people under the banner of the Congress, the boycott is doomed to failure; because it does not correspond, nay it is positively contrary, to the economic condition of the vast majority of the population.* If the Congress chooses to base itself on the frantic enthusiasm for burning foreign cloth, it will be building castles on a bed of quicksand. Such enthusiasm cannot last; the time will soon come when people will feel the scarcity of cloth, and as long as there will be cheap foreign cloth in the market there can be no possibility of inducing the poor to go naked rather than to buy it. The *Charka* has been relegated to its well-deserved place in the museum; to expect that in these days of machinery it can be revived and made to supply the need of 320 millions of human beings, is purely visionary. The boycott will enlist the support of the manufacturers, *but it will never receive a dependable response from the consumers.* Then, all the doctrines of purifying the soul may be good for the opulent intellectuals, but their charm for the starving millions cannot be permanent. Physical needs know no bounds, and a political movement cannot be sublimated beyond material reasons and necessities. They are mistaken who say that Indian civilization is purely spiritual, and that the Indian people are not subject to the same material laws that determine the destinies of the rest of humanity.

While for any serious or lasting purposes, the Non-cooperation programme cannot be said to have achieved a small part of what was expected, the 36th Congress intends to go a step further on the road of Non-cooperation. To their great discomfiture the leaders of the Congress observe the popular enthusiasm evoked by Khilafat agitation and Non-cooperation subsiding day by day. The enlisting of several lakhs of members and the raising of the Tilak Swaraj Fund cannot be accepted as a clear reflection of the popular support behind the Congress. Pessimism about the solidity of ranks and tenacity of purpose of the Non-cooperation demonstrations has of late been repeatedly expressed by responsible Congress leaders, from both the press and platform. To enlist his name in the Congress register and to contribute a rupee to the Swaraj Fund does not necessarily imply that a member will be ready to take active part in the struggle. In order to keep the artificially fomented popular enthusiasm alive, the leaders of the Congress have been looking for new diversions of an exciting character. But either consciously or unconsciously, they would not lay their hand on the real cause of popular discontent by helping the masses acquire consciousness. Instead, another irresponsible step has been taken. Without waiting for the annual Congress, the All-India Committee has sanctioned Civil Disobedience. But the very language of the resolution shows that *its authors themselves are in doubt as to whether it can be carried into practice any better than the other aspects of Non-cooperation.* The resolution asks 'those who could support themselves to leave the government services'. Considering the fact that the proportion of the government employees unable to make both ends meet one day without their miserable salary is almost 90 per cent, it cannot be expected that the response to this ukase will be very imposing.

Civil Disobedience when carried into practice will be some sort of a national strike. If everybody stops working, the Government will be paralyzed. But is the Congress certain that everybody will readily respond to its call? If it is, then it betrays lamentable ignorance of the material condition of the people, as well as of the economic laws that determine all social forces and political actions. On leaving their civil and military occupation, thousands and thousands of people will be without any means of livelihood; is the Congress in a position to find work for them? And it should not be forgotten that the lower middle-class element employed in the government departments will never stoop to manual work. The Congress leaders seem to appreciate the complexity of the situation; because, in the words of Mr Gandhi, 'they are not prepared to provide employment for those soldiers who would leave the army'. With the disastrous effects of the exodus of the Assam plantation-workers still fresh in memory, how can it be expected that the same tactics would not be followed by the same result in the future? The political organ of a nation cannot execute its task only with popular demonstrations. Our object is not confined to bothering the Government; we are struggling for freedom. It cannot be realized unless the activities of the Congress are determined by a constructive programme, unless the leadership of the Congress becomes more responsible and less demagogic.

Taken light-heartedly, the resolution of Civil Disobedience will end in making the Congress ridiculous. Because, in spite of all optimism, all enthusiasm, the Congress does not represent the interests of all the sections and classes of which the nation is composed. Much less does it advocate the material welfare of the workers and peasants who form the overwhelming majority of the nation. What is the use of speaking in high-sounding language when the speeches are not backed up by action, determined and permanent? The spirit of the people cannot be raised by such impotent tactics; nor is the Government terrorized. They only discredit the speaker, sooner or later. The threat of declaring *Jehad* unless the Khilafat is redeemed has become too hackneyed, the deferring of the establishment of Swaraj month by month fails to inspire confidence in thinking people. Why do these bombastic resolutions of the Congress never come out of the airy realm of words? Because the Congress does not determine its tactics in accordance with the play of social forces.

It is simply deluding oneself to think that the great ferment of popular energy expressed by the strikes in the cities and agrarian riots in the country is the result of the Congress or, better-said, of the Non-cooperation agitation. No, it is neither the philippics against the 'satanic western civilization', nor the constant reiteration of the Punjab wrongs, nor the abstract formula of Khilafat that have awakened the discontent of the wretched masses, who appear to have once and for all shaken off the spirit of passive resignation. The cause of this awakening, which is the only factor that has added real vigour and a show of majesty to the national struggle, is to be looked for in their age-long economic exploitation and social slavery. The mass revolt is directed against the propertied class, irrespective of nationality. This exploitation had become intense long since, but the economic crisis during the war-period accentuated it. The seething discontent among the masses, which broke out in open revolt on the morrow of the war, was not, as the Congress would have it, because the Government betrayed all its promises, but because the abnormal trade boom in the aftermath of the war intensified the economic exploitation to such extent that the people were desperate, and all bonds of patience were broken.

Newly developed industries brought hundreds and thousands of workers to the crowded cities where they were thrown into a condition altogether revolting. Sudden prosperity of the merchants and manufacturers brought in its train increased poverty and suffering for the workers. City life opened new visions to the workers, hitherto resigned to their miserable lot as ordained by Providence. The inequality of wealth and comfort became too glaring; the worker got over the lethargic resignation typical of the Indian peasantry, and rebelled. His revolt, under such circumstances, could not have been against this or that government; *it was against the brutal system that wanted to crush him to the dust*. Mass revolt is alarmingly contagious. The spirit was soon carried to the village by various channels, and resulted in the agrarian riots, which today are spreading like wild-fire all over the country. These are the developments of the social forces generated by objective conditions. *The political movement must give up the pretension of having created these forces, but must bend its head before their majestic strides and adapt itself to their action and reaction*. It is these social forces which lend potentiality and real strength to the political movement. In fact, every political movement is the outcome of the development of certain social forces.

What has the Congress done to lead the workers and peasants in their economic struggle? It has tried so far only to exploit the mass movement for its political ends. In every strike or peasant revolt the non-cooperators have sacrificed the economic interest of the strikers for a political demonstration. The Congress, from its intellectual, ideological and material aloofness, demands Swaraj and expects the masses of the population to follow it through thick and thin. It does not hesitate to call upon the poverty-stricken workers and peasants to make all kinds of sacrifices—sacrifices which are to be made in the name of national welfare, but which contribute more to benefit the native wealthy than to harm the foreign ruler. The Congress claims the political leadership of the nation, but every act betrays its ignorance of or indifference to the material interests of the majority of the people. *So long as the Congress does not show its capability and desire to make the every-day struggle of the masses its own, it will not be able to secure their steady and conscious support.* Of course, it should not be forgotten that with or without the leadership of the Congress, the workers and peasants will continue their own economic and social struggle and eventually conquer what they need. They don't need so much the leadership of the Congress but the latter's political success depends entirely on the conscious support of the masses. Let not the Congress believe that it has won the unconditional leadership of the masses without having done anything to defend their material interests.

His personal character may lead the masses to worship the Mahatmaji; strikers engaged in a struggle for securing a few pice increase of wages may shout 'Mahatmaji-ki jai'; the first fury of rebellion may lead them to do many things without any conceivable connection with what they are really fighting for; their newly aroused enthusiasm, choked for ages by starvation, may make them burn their last piece of loin-cloth; but in their sober moments what do they ask for? It is not political autonomy, nor is it the redemption of the Khilafar. It is the petty, but imperative necessities of everyday life that egg them on to the fight. The workers in the cities demand higher wages, shorter hours, better living conditions; and the poor peasantry fight for the possession of land, freedom from excessive rents and taxes, redress from the exhorbitant exploitation by the landlord. They rebel against exploitation, social and economic; it does not make any difference to them to which nationality the exploiter belongs. *Such is the nature of the forces that are really and objectively revolutionary; and any change in the political administration of the country will be effected by these forces. The sooner the Congress understands this, the better.*

If the Congress aspires to assume the leadership of the masses without founding itself upon the awakening mass energy, it will soon be relegated to the dead past in order to share the ignominy of its predecessor. To enlist the conscious support of the masses, it should approach them not with high politics and towering idealism, but with the readiness to help them secure their immediate wants, then gradually to lead them further ahead. It is neither the Khilafat cry, nor the Boycott resolution, nor the absurd doctrine of 'back to the Vedas with Charka in hand', nor the scheme of making the middle-class intellectuals and petty shop-keepers declare a national strike that will unite the majority of the nation behind the Congress. Words cannot make people fight; they have to be impelled by irresistible objective forces. The oppressed, pauperized, miserable workers and peasants are bound to fight, because there is no hope left fot them. *The Congress must have the workers and peasants behind it; and it can win their lasting confidence only when it ceases to sacrifice them ostensibly for a higher cause, namely, the so-called national interest, but really for the material prosperity of the merchants and manufacturers. If the Congress would lead the revolution which is shocking India to the very foundations, let it not put its faith in mere demonstrations and temporary wild enthusiasm. Let it make the immediate demands of the Trade Unions, as summarized by the Cawnpur workers, its own demands; let it make the programme of the Kisan Sabhas its own programme, and the time will soon come when the Congress will not stop before any obstacle;* it will not have to lament that Swaraj cannot be declared on a fixed date because the people have not made enough sacrifice. It will be backed by the irresistible strength of the entire people consciously fighting for their material interest. *Failing to do so, with all its zeal for Non-cooperation, for all its determination to have the Sèvres treaty revised, despite its doctrine of Soul Force, the Congress will have to give in to another organization which will grow out of the ranks of the common people with the object of fighting for their interests.* If the Congress wants to have the nation behind it, let it not be blinded by the interest of a small class; let it not be guided by the unseen hand of the 'merchants and manufacturers' who have replaced the 'talented lawyers' in the Congress, and whom the present tactics seek to install in the place of the Satanic British.

While the Congress, under the banner of Non-cooperation, has been dissipating the revolutionary forces, a counter-revolutionary element has appeared in the field to mislead the latter. Look out! The revolutionary zeal of workers is subsiding, as shown by the slackening of the strike movement; the Trade Unions are falling in the hands of reformists, adventurers and government agents; the Aman Sabhas are captivating the attention of the poor peasants by administering to their immediate grievances. The Government knows where lies the strength of the movement; it is trying to divorce the masses from the Congress. This clever policy, directed by master hands, cannot be counteracted by windy phrases and sentimental appeals. Equally clever steps should be taken. *The consciousness of the masses must be awakened; that is the only way of keeping them steady in the fight.*

Fellow Countrymen, a few words about Hindu-Moslem unity, which has been given such a prominent place in the Congress programme. The people of India are divided by vertical lines, into innumerable sects, religions, creeds and castes. To seek to cement these cleavages by artificial and sentimental propaganda is a hopeless task. But fortunately, and perhaps to the great discomfiture of the orthodox patriots, who believe that India is a special creation of Providence, there is one mighty force that spontaneously divides all these innumerable sections horizontally into two homogeneous parts. This is the economic force; the exploitation of the disinherited by the propertied class. This force is in operation in India, and is effecting the innumerable vertical lines of social cleavage, while divorcing the two great classes further apart. The inexorable working of this force is drawing the Hindu workers and peasants closer and closer to their Moslem comrades. *This is the only agency of Hindu-Moslem unity.* Whoever will be bold enough to depend on the ruthless march of this force of social-economics, will not have to search frantically for pleas by which the Mussulman can be induced to respect the cow, nor to make the ignorant Hindu peasant believe that the salvation of his soul and the end of his earthly misery lies in the redemption of the Khilafat or the subjugation of the Armenians by the Turks. Hindu-Moslem unity is not to be cemented by sentimentality; it is being realized practically by the development of economic forces.

Fellow Countrymen, let the Congress reflect the needs of the nation and not the ambition of a small class. Let the Congress cease to engage in political gambling and vibrate in response to the social forces developing in the country. Let it prove by deeds that it wants to end foreign exploitation not to secure the monopoly to the native propertied class, but to liberate the Indian people from all exploitation—political, economic and social. Let it show that it really represents the people and can lead them in their struggle in every stage of it. Then the Congress will secure the leadership of the nation, and Swaraj will be won, not on a particular day selected according to the caprice of some individuals, but by the conscious and concerted action of the masses.

1 December 1921

CHAPTER VI

Manifesto to the All-India Congress Committee

Fellow Countrymen,

Since its inauguration by the Special Session of the Congress in Calcutta, the Non-cooperation Movement has passed through various stages marked by the resolutions adopted at Nagpur, Bezwada, Ahmedabad, Bardoli and Delhi. An analysis of its course shows that the movement has not been kept steady and straight on the line marked out by the revolutionary principles formulated in Calcutta and ratified at Nagpur. The tactics of militant Non-cooperation—that brilliantly conceived weapon available for the Indian people under the present circumstances—has not been wielded with the required courage and determination. Nagpur and Bezwada marked the period of a march forward; but the revolutionary upheavals in the last months of 1921 forced the Congress to show its true colour, and the Ahmedabad, Bardoli and Delhi resolutions were the signs of decline, degeneration and betrayal. They were not a strategic retreat as we are asked to believe, because the movement had acquired the utmost strength and was in the highest of spirits in the months preceding the debacle at Ahmedabad. Consequently, there was no need of any retreat. If a retreat it was, it was not one before the onslaught of the Government, but a retreat caused by terror struck in our leadership by the rising tide of mass-energy. This being the case, Ahmedabad, and particularly the suspension of Civil Disobedience ordered from Bardoli, was a veritable betrayal of the revolutionary rank and file by the non-revolutionary and reactionary leadership.

A study of the movement during the last two years, beginning with the Special Session in Calcutta, brings into evidence two facts, viz., 1. that those who were instrumental in formulating the idea of Non-cooperation, did not understand the full significance of what they were advocating; and 2. that ignorance of the socio-economic forces which made the conception of such a revolutionary idea possible made the leaders count more upon artificially fomented sentimental enthusiasm than upon the dynamic revolutionary outburst of mass-energy. Revolution must develop along revolutionary channels, and the movement whose leadership you desire to assume, is essentially revolutionary. To dissipate and denounce mass-action for the sake of the interests of the respectable middle-class is the worst crime that can be committed against the freedom of the Indian people. It is tantamount to welcoming the permanence of British rule, or to use the more respectable term, 'equal partnership in the Commonwealth', rather than brook a radical change in the socio-economic condition to which the Indian masses have been subordinated for centuries, not only by the British conquerors, but also before they came. Can you say, honourable Gentlemen, that the actions of the Congress during the last half a year do not bring upon its head this serious charge of having betrayed the nation for the interests of a small class of landlords and capitalists? Today you are reaping the fruit of this act of yours and of your colleagues.

The Congress not only failed to appreciate the true character of the movement, but was terrified as soon as its revolutionary aspects began to unfold spontaneously, despite all efforts of the Government to suppress them, together with the desire of our own leaders to dissipate and thwart them. The inevitable result has been the present situation, which is marked by confusion, impotency, indecision and despondency. In order to understand clearly how the Congress neglected and then betrayed the revolutionary forces, and thus disgracefully failed to discharge its mighty and honourable task, it is necessary to review the past briefly, and to make this retrospective analysis dispassionately, objectively.

First of all, it is necessary to trace the genesis of the Non-cooperation Movement, to be able to appreciate the significance of the social forces whose development created a situation suitable for the Non-cooperation Movement. This understanding will dissipate the subjective philosophy dominating our movement and at the same time will reveal the cross-currents of the economic interests, caught in which the Congress is drifting further and further from the stream of revolutionary sentiment. In short, it will help us go beyond the realm of frothy sentimentalism and transcendental politics, in order to discover a solid material foundation of the movement. In this way we will discover that all the pacifism and metaphysical ideas of the Congress were consciously or unconsciously meant to prevent a revolutionary upheaval, which could not be trusted to subside after having helped the native propertied and intellectual classes come to power,—a revolutionary upheaval which would not stop short eventually of a radical readjustment in the socio-economic relations of the people.

The idea of 'making the government impossible' by withdrawing all popular support could not have been conceived much earlier than it was done. Mahatma Gandhi with his imagination and personality as well as those enthusiastic and idealistic people who are following him existed before 1919; causes of discontent against the British rule were also present; agitation for national autonomy or freedom had been going on for a quarter of a century. But a movement of such dimensions, of such a revolutionary character, was not inaugurated before. There must have been, then, something lacking; otherwise it was not necessary to wait till 1919 to formulate and adopt the tactics of militant Passive Resistance. What was lacking, evidently, was the development of some dynamic force, without which such a militant measure could not be made effective. So, contrary to your belief, it was not the Non-cooperation slogan that brought about a gigantic popular awakening, but it was the popular awakening that made possible the idea to organize a sweeping onslaught against the Government. The spontaneous mass upheaval, as expressed through food riots, strikes, agrarian disturbances etc., which was felt throughout the length and breadth of the country since 1916, spoke for the awakening of revolutionary mass-energy. It demonstrated that the hitherto passive and inarticulate masses had begun to develop a fighting mood. Or in other words, the forces which could make a general offensive against the Government possible, had come into existence. The passing of various legislations gagging the press, prohibiting public meetings, restraining the right of assemblage, the atrocious Conspiracy Act, Explosive Substances Act, the Defence of India Act, by which thousands and thousands were locked up in jail without even a pretence of trial—all these repressive measures, to mention but a few, did not provoke such an outburst of protest as followed the introduction of the Rowlatt Bills. In fact, the Rowlatt Bills were formulated only to continue the state of affairs obtaining under the Defence of India Act. But the latter, enforced with an iron hand in the years immediately preceding, did not provoke any serious popular opposition. This goes to show that a new force had come into being around 1919. It was the awakening of mass-energy, brought about by economic exploitation intensified during and immediately after the war. This mass-awakening is the objective factor which contributed to the inauguration of Passive Resistance and subsequently, of the Non-cooperation Movement.

Such was the genesis of the Non-cooperation Movement; but the resolution adopted in Calcutta and ratified at Nagpur—not to mention the shameful denunciation by the Congress of the revolutionary outbreaks in Bombay, Gorakhpur, Chauri Chaura etc., and the Bardoli Resolution—betrays on the part of our leaders a deplorable ignorance of the social forces which had brought about the movement they pretend to guide. This ignorance, which in many instances was wilful, started the movement on a wrong track. Instead of conforming it to the understanding and immediate necessities of the rebellious masses, it was based upon metaphysical abstractions and the shifting sands of lower middle-class sentimentality. Instead of recognizing the fact that the movement was the result of a spontaneous social upheaval and, therefore, should be directed in consonance with the dictates of imperious economic laws, the leaders pretended to have created the situation and imagined personalities to be greater than objective forces. Essentially and predominantly a revolt of the exploited and expropriated majority, the movement was utilized by the leaders to further the interests of the propertied and intellectual classes. One can pronounce even a stronger indictment; the leaders sought to utilize a revolutionary social upheaval for strengthening the hand of reaction. While the revolutionary situation in the post-war years was the result of a mass-awakening, and the Non-cooperation Movement was made possible by the development of this revolutionary situation, the Congress failed to appreciate it, although it wanted to and did exploit the situation for the purposes of upper- and middle-class politics. The only social element—the working class including the pauperized peasantry—which is in a position to enforce the tactics of Non-cooperation, was but casually mentioned in a minor clause of the Resolution. Non-payment of taxes was also mentioned, but later development proved that the Congress did not consider the matter seriously. It is well-known how the whole Non-cooperation Movement has been wrecked upon this rock.

Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated by actual experience that neither the lawyers, nor the students, nor the petty employees, but only the workers and peasants can make Non-cooperation effective. The toiling masses are the body and soul of the movement. The boycott of the courts by a few lawyers did not and could not paralyse the Government. Law-courts are an indispensable apparatus of the State; they are necessary to maintain property rights. So long as society remains divided into antagonistic classes, law-courts cannot be abolished. Courts under a national government controlled by the native upper- and middle-classes will have the same function, viz., to coerce and suppress the expropriated. Several thousand non-cooperating students could not harm in any way the educational system which creates 'slave mentality'. Titled persons have not given up their titles, nor have the high officials resigned. It is not possible, not because these people's patriotism is any less sincere, but because the very sentiment of patriotism is based on some material interest or other. The class to which these people belong believes that the welfare of the Motherland lies not in their resignation, but in the complete Indianization of the Public Services. So this particular clause of the Resolution proposed to realize something contrary to the interests of the people on whom its realization depends. For all the noisiness of lower middle-class extremism, the government offices are as full as ever and the state machinery is not affected in any way. Soldiers have not abandoned their services because they were told it was 'sinful' to enlist in the British army. The Charka has not crippled the Lancashire textile industry; the Khaddar Movement is declining on account of the economic fallacy involved in it. The workers and peasants revolted, not to purify their souls, but to have something more to eat. To use Khaddar at the injunction of the Congress is contrary to this natural desire of theirs, because Khaddar being more expensive leaves them less for food. Merchants and manufacturers have not shown any inclination to make less profit for the sake of the nation. They became patriots and stopped importing foreign cloth when it was not profitable, owing to the unfavourable exchange value of the rupee; but lately the importation is increasing rapidly in spite of picketing and all. Patriotic Indian merchants are having Khaddar manufactured in England and Japan and will surreptitiously pass them on as the 'sacred' commodity and make 50 per cent more profit by this act of patriotism. Such are the accomplishments of the Non-cooperation Movement based on the spirit of self-sacrifice and patriotism of the middle-class.

While the Congress was frittering away its energy on the above-mentioned activities, whose inevitable collapse was a foregone conclusion to all thinking people, the movement remained based upon mass-action, which was misled and dissipated by the leaders of the Congress. When we consider the part played by the working-class, including the peasantry, in strikes, demonstrations, riots and other mass outbreaks, it becomes clear that the life-force of the movement is contained in the minor clause referring half-heartedly to the labouring-class. It can be said that whatever has been accomplished by the Non-cooperation Movement has been due to the rebellion of the toiling masses. And when every act of the Congress leaders shows their indifference, terror and in many cases hostility to this driving force behind the movement, is it any wonder that you, divorced from the support of the masses, are packing up for the journey to the camp of the Moderates? There are many among you who even cannot do this, because the very Moderates are too progressive for them; therefore, they want to vegetate and drag a revolutionary movement into the rut of a puerile 'Constructive Programme' based upon reactionary pacifism.

The Congress has failed to enforce the Non-cooperation programme. You must confess it, if you sincerely want to lead the movement ahead. The cause of this failure was that the revolutionary forces capable of carrying through a National Strike were not mobilized and were not given a place in the first rank, a place they deserve, because none else can hold the post but a revolutionary vanguard, which is the role of the working-class in the movement of the national liberation of the Indian people. Experience during the last half-year proves, that while in the first stages of the movement it was lack of understanding which prevented the Congress from including the demands of the working-class in its programme, the time came when the indifference and even hostility to the working-class was provoked by the consciousness of class-interests inside the Congress ranks. In proportion as the revolutionary significance of the mass-movement became manifest, the reactionary nature of the leadership could no longer be kept hidden. It was on the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress, at the very moment when the revolutionary spirit of the toiling masses was raging so high that the political movement could be pushed ahead by means of militant mass-strikes, that the cross-currents in the nationalist movement were to be noticed very clearly. It became evident that there was no community of interest between the leadership representing the propertied and intellectual middle-class, and the following embodying the rebellious masses of the exploited. The latter's revolutionary actions were repudiated and condemned by the former, because the material interests driving both to action happened to be conflicting. The process of inevitable divorce of the one from the other, therefore, began. This process has gone on widening the cleavage every day, while the Congress has not lifted a finger to stay it. Attempts were made to maintain the superficial unity of all classes by emotional appeals, all of which have proved unsuccessful. The task you are confronted with today is to find a way to bridge over this cleavage, in order to prevent the struggle for national liberation being sacrificed on the altar of the interests of a small section of the society. The tendency of the Congress since the fateful days at Bardoli, and as expressed in the recent Provincial Conference, is dominated by this narrow class-interest, which cannot be embellished by all the talk about idealism and spiritual culture.

The solution of the problem that confronts you, your ability to tide over the present crisis, depends upon a realistic orientation of the situation. In the words of the Nagpur Sub-committee, 'Swaraj is a material thing and has to be attained by material means'. All the classes taking part in the national movement are doing so, actuated not by any spiritual call or abstract ideal. They are driven by their respective material interests, which in relation to one another are conflicting. The merchants and manufacturers want wider scope for the investment of their capital. National freedom to them means the freedom to exploit the labour power and natural resources of the country. Their cry is Industrial Development, Fiscal Autonomy. The intellectuals demand political rights, since these will put them on the road to power and progress. They militate with the slogan of Provincial Autonomy and Complete Indianization of the Public Services. The semi-intellectual lower middle-class struggles to save itself from dire starvation and steady degeneration. It does not find any hope in the programme of the upper-class political parties; therefore it advocates a more radical change in the present system. But its radicalism stops short of revolution and we find it talking of a vague Swaraj. The toiling masses—the workers and peasants—stand in need of an all-round improvement of their economic as well as social condition. This need cannot be satisfied by any concession, nor any reform, since it is the outcome of the present property relations, which will subsist even under a national government. As the lot of the workers and peasants can only be changed by a radical transformation of society, so they are the only relentless and uncompromising revolutionary forces. They may be still ignorant of their interests, they may not as yet be conscious of their wants, but they have begun to feel the impulse, as expressed by the wave of strikes and agrarian disturbances.

All these material causes are the motive force of the movement. In proportion as these causes accumulate, collectively or severally, the movement becomes strong. In determining the tactics suitable for the fight, it is necessary to take these fundamental material factors into consideration. The Congress Programme appears to be to advocate the interests of all classes except the workers and peasants—the most revolutionary element, the only element capable of wielding the weapon of Non-cooperation. It must be said that until recently the Congress Party did not have any definite programme, except the cry for some sort of Swaraj. No official political programme has yet been formulated, but many authoritative leaders have on various occasions explained what they mean by Swaraj. It is nothing more than what the Moderates aspire for; only the latter say, 'don't make so much noise, don't bother our imperial peers; let us proceed slowly'. The goal of the Liberal League is Dominion Status, and that of the Congress Party is complete Self-Government within the British Commonwealth. The former proposes to reach the goal by progressive constitutional means, whereas the latter demands a 'change of heart' on the part of the British. Well, divested of the phraseological trimmings, there is no difference between the political programme of the two parties. Both stand for the interests of the upper– and middle-classes. But they do differ in the methods by which the objective is to be attained. The tactics of the Congress Party is more militant; but the militancy is rather of words than of deeds. Here lies the secret of all the indecision, hesitancy and confusion that marks the action of the Congress.

In spite of the fact that British domination hinders the progress of all classes, it is the working masses which have proved and are bound to be the most revolutionary. The experience of the last several years has demonstrated this fact. The upper- and middle-classes can gain something by compromising with the imperial overlord. Their material interests are not altogether incompatible with one another. The capitalist imperialism of Britain is based on the exploitation of the toiling masses, the upper- and middle-classes being put to some handicap incidentally. The prosperity of the native upper- and middle-classes will not be built so much at the expense of the imperialist monopoly as by the extended right to exploit the masses. Consequently, it is not impossible for the foreign and native exploiting classes to come to an agreement as to the proportionate share in the exploitation of the labour power and natural resources of the country. This being the case, it is clear why a deep-seated revolutionary spirit can be found only in one social class, viz. the exploited and expropriated masses, including the pauperized, semi-intellectual lower middle-class. This is the foundation of the revolutionary nationalist movement, whose leadership the Congress ought to assume, should it desire to be anything else than the Liberal League, and not to be annexed to it in course of time.

The time has arrived when it is essential for the Congress to clarify its social affiliation and political orientation. It needs a thorough weeding of its ranks in order that these can be consolidated as the rallying ground of only those inspired by a sincere revolutionary will. In short, the Congress stands in need of a clearly defined Political Programme, first of all. Then there must be formulated a New Programme of Action in accordance with the character of the social forces available for carrying this programme through. Lastly, all impossible or impractical methods should be discarded.

The cardinal principle of our Political Programme is a National Democratic Government free from any foreign protection or supervision.

In the Action Programme are to be formulated the methods by which all the revolutionary forces will be mobilized in the struggle for realizing the establishment of an Indian Republic. This mobilization cannot be effected unless the immediate needs of the most revolutionary element, that is, the working-class, are taken into consideration. As demonstrated above, the complete National Independence of India can be realized only by the efforts of the workers and peasants. Therefore, to develop their revolutionary consciousness is the burden of our Programme of Action.

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The ignorant workers and peasants do not understand political theories any more than they care for spiritual abstractions. They want to satisfy their hunger, to have the intensity and brutality of exploitation modified. Their economic condition has become unbearable, so they are driven to revolt. Therefore, the best means of leading them on in the revolutionary path is to help them in the struggle for their immediate needs; to help them organize; to make them understand their class-interests; to enourage them in every revolutionary way; and to warn them against the conspiracy of the 'labour leaders' who are the henchmen of the employing-class or the agents of the Government. The enemy knows where lies the great danger; he is busy in the field in order to deflect the working-class from the political movement for national liberation; because divorced from this objective revolutionary force, the nationalist movement will be impotent and it will be easy to liquidate it for the time being by throwing a few bones of concession to the capitalists and the office-hunting intellectuals. The working-class has been abused, expolited, denounced and betrayed by the Congress, which never paid any attention to the removal of its immediate grievances. Now, at this psychological moment, have stepped in the Government as well as the most advanced section of the employers and landlords. Reformist labour legislations are being proposed and passed, plans are made for improving the living condition of the city workers. Trade Unions are being organized under the leadership of officially inspired men; peasant co-operatives are being formed under the patronage of the district officers; village reform associations are being started with the help of benevolent Zemindars. These are ominous signs and should be duly noticed. All these are done with the purpose of checking the rising tide of mass-revolt. A little improvement in their present miserable condition will put the working-class to sleep, will pacify the acuteness of their fury, and increase their faith in reformism and the benevolence of the Government and the employer. Thus the forces of revolution will be temporarily controlled, and the movement for national liberation consequently crushed.

Our immediate task is to prevent this eventuality; to frustrate this sinister design of the Government, leagued with the employing and landowning class. We must assume the leadership of the working-class, and we will not be able to drive the kept labour leaders out of the field unless we are actuated by revolutionary ideals—unless we stand for the interests of the toiling masses. The Congress should at once launch a programme advocating the fight for higher wages for the workers, an eight-hour day, better housing, recognition of Unions, right of strike, equal pay for equal work, abolition of landlordism, reduction of rents and taxes, strong measures for the abolition of usury and such other measures as will correspond to the immediate necessities of the masses. Vigorous agitation should be carried on among the workers and peasants to show that their condition cannot be changed by palliatives, to expose the sinister motive of the reformist labour leader, liberal employer and benevolent landlord. These demands should be enforced by mass-action—strikes, demonstrations, peasant revolts. Leaving the cloth-shop and liquor-stall alone, every Congress volunteer should take active part in these mass-demonstrations.

This is the only means of creating a situation fit for the inauguration of Civil Disobedience. Not by denouncing them, betraying them, but by making their cause its own, will the Congress assume the leadership of the masses. By realizing this organic relation with the only revolutionary social class, the Congress will be on the right path and will march from one victory to another till the ultimate goal is attained.

Hoist the banner of Swaraj and rally the people under it with the slogan of Living Wages to the Worker and Land to the Tiller.

15 July 1922.

CHAPTER XI

The Explosion*

While India was in the throes of the excitement of the 37th Annual Session of the Indian National Congress, which was celebrated in the last week of December and upon whose deliberations was concentrated the attention of the entire nation, from the alien bureaucratic Government down to the primitive denizens of the hills and jungles,—in the midst of this political pow-wow, a bomb exploded whose effects are apt to be wide and far-reaching upon the future course of the nationalist movement.

The main task of the 37th Congress was to define a programme and to lay down a line of tactics for the ensuing year which would rescue the movement from its slow degeneration. Three main tendencies were manifest on the eve of the Congress convention. One, the right wing nationalists, mainly represented by the Maharashtra group of Bombay Province, openly advocated 'Responsive Cooperation' with the Indian Government, which meant, in plain language, the abandonment of the Non-cooperation tactics and participation in the new Legislative Councils granted by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme of 1919. This position closely approximated to that of the left-wing Moderates, who had accepted the Reforms since their inception, and had repudiated the Gandhi doctrine of Non-cooperation. The second tendency, a left-wing movement headed by Mr C. R. Das supported by a considerable minority from the Punjab, United Provinces and Central Provinces, advocated a more aggressive policy of Non-cooperation, based upon entry into the Reform Councils with the object of wrecking them, and the organization of workers' and peasants' unions throughout the country upon a programme of economic and social reform, with the object of eventually declaring a nation-wide strike. The Centrists, representing the ultra-Gandhist doctrines on non-violent Non-cooperation, put forward tenaciously the threadbare 'Constructive Programme' adopted in March 1922 in the 'Bardoli Retreat', and which advocated the triple boycott of schools, law-courts and foreign cloth, while repudiating the use of mass-action or the adoption of Civil Disobedience. This programme, already in force for one year, dismally failed to achieve results, and combined with government repression which, in the course of the eight months, clapped over 20,000 people into jail, effectually lulled the movement to sleep. To break this fatal lethargy an put a stop to the gradual alienation of mass-energy, constituted the crux of the problem to be solved by the 37th Annual Session of the Indian National Congress.

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* Note: This chapter has been slightly shortened by deleting some passages. Deletions are indicated by three dots (...). The passages deleted are mostly quotations from the contemporary press; the excisions do not affect the argument or substance of the chapter. For the text of the programme see *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Volume I, pp. 452–4. SNR

It was at this psychological moment, on the very eve of the Congress session, that the Vanguard Party, whose centre of activities, due to government repression, is in Europe, and which for the past two years, by means of manifestoes, leaflets, books and through its bimonthly organ *The Vanguard* (later *The Advance-Guard*), has been setting forth the viewpoint, principles and tactics of Socialism as applied to the Indian movement; it was at this crucial moment that the Vanguard Party issued a Social Democratic Programme nicely adjusted to meet the present requirements of the Indian situation, and caused it to be circulated in India and among the nationalists and students abroad, by means of a brochure entitled 'What Do We Want', and a leaflet issued from Switzerland called 'A Programme for the Indian National Congress'. The brochure, a popularized version of the Programme, was circulated in India by the middle of November and was promptly prohibited by the Government. The Programme itself was published in the 1 December number of *The Advance-Guard,* and sent out, together with the leaflet, in time to reach India on the very eve of the Congress session,—it did in fact arrive by 19 December, and was prohibited by an order of the Bengal Government on 20 December.

Then a strange thing happened. The London *Times* and the *Morning Post* of 21 December, published a column each of vituperative comment upon the summarized version of the 'Programme', which they termed a 'Bolshevik Plot' for India, together with the most filthy mud-slinging at the personal character and career of Manabendra Nath Roy, to whose sole authorship they gratuitously attributed the unsigned Programme. The *Times*, somewhat more restrained than that organ of rank reaction and tool of Scotland Yard, the *Morning Post*, contented itself with a rather neat summary of the Programme in all its essential details, which it described as 'adapting Bolshevism to Indian conditions'. But the wrath of the *Morning Post* knew no bounds. In its blind rage, it attributed the hidden hand, not alone of Bolshevism, but of German Republicanism behind the political document, and acidly inquired why the British Foreign Office should permit Germany, a 'conquered country', to harbour these 'active conspirators'. It declared that Republican Germany and Soviet Russia are one, and in this affair work to the same end and by the same instruments. At the same time, it seized the opportunity thus presented to point out the hostility of the Programme to Indian capitalism and landlordism as well as to British Imperialism, and declared that Indian capitalists and landlords should henceforth cease to tolerate a movement which holds for them such dire possibilities. It also published what purported to be a life-sketch of M. N. Roy, the alleged author of the document, supposedly living in Berlin under the 'protection' of combined Republican German and Bolshevik Russian patronage,—and for sheer Billingsgate, we would refer readers to this respectable organ of the British aristocracy, apparently inspired by the inexhaustible fountains of mythical facts conjured up by its hidden genius, Scotland Yard.

But this was not all. British Imperialism, rendered blind with rage at the slightest threat to its secure existence, permitted (one would rather say commanded) its lightning messenger, Reuter, to cable out to India the complete contents of the Programme together with the choice comments and reflections of the *Morning Post*—the cabled matter covering some three and a half closely-printed newspaper columns, and costing a sum which only mad Imperialism would consent to pay in these halcyon days of unemployment doles and retrenchment committees.

What was the object of such apparent spendthrift extravagance? There were three. First, to circumvent the possible effect of such a Programme upon the left-wing Congress leaders, whose own ideas in some respects closely corresponded to its principal points, by terrorizing them against its adoption. In the language of Reuter, *It will be interesting to see whether the Congress adopts the plan or any part of the plan suggested. At any rate, it will not be difficult for Indian politicians—whether of the Congress camp or not—with the help of this programme, to be satisfied as to the source from which the proposals that may be put before the Congress' have sprung*. A veiled threat lies in these words of which it is easy to grasp the significance. A National Congress, convicted by Reuter of adopting a 'Bolshevik Programme', could more easily be declared an illegal assemblage and driven to an underground existence—a consummation devoutly longed for by the Government, and deeply dreaded by the lawyers, small capitalists and middle peasantry who form the majority of this non-revolutionary organization, which represents the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie, driven temporarily into extremism by their pressing economic disabilities, but never willing to stake their all to bring about a change of fortune.

The second cunning motive of Imperialism in countenancing such sensational expenditure was to stampede the upper bourgeoisie, the rich landlords and capitalists already deeply 'loyal' to their beneficent protector, out of the mood of demanding further concessions as a boon for their 'loyalty'. Too much talk about 'Indianization of the Services' and 'complete fiscal autonomy' had driven thorns into the Imperial flesh during the past year, and caused many an uneasy moment to British capitalists and members of that 'steel frame' of British Imperialism, the Indian Civil Service. By holding up the bogey of Bolshevism, of 'nationalization of land and industries' before the eyes of the rich and cooperating Indian Moderates, it was hoped, and justifiably, to bind them with even tighter strings, to the Juggernaut of Empire.

The third motive was sheer fright, and a clumsy intention to render all past and future propaganda of the Vanguard Party null, first, by branding it in the eyes of Indians as reprehensible and 'paid' Bolshevism, to echo which in the slightest degree would be to incur the heaviest penalties of government repression, and secondly, to herald it abroad among the 'conquered' nations of Europe, that British Imperialism expected them to suppress all such propaganda, directed against her imperial interests.

So far, so good. The British Foreign Office and its servants of Scotland Yard are no fools, and they succeeded for the moment in their main designs. The Programme, thanks to the services of Reuter, received a publicity throughout the length and breadth of India which the Vanguard Party, placed from the outset under the Imperial ban, could never have dreamed of achieving. Every Anglo-Indian, Moderate and Nationalist paper in India, in the English language and in the vernaculars, printed the Programme in part or in full, and commented thereon for the edification of its readers, according to its own peculiar light. In the words of one nationalist journal: 'Manabendra Nath Roy has suddenly leaped into fame; his Programme is the talk of the country just now'. The Viceroy gave it official notice in his speech to the Bengal Landlords on 24 December, and they reciprocated in their speech to him.....

. . . Their mutual assurances of support and cooperation in the 'maintenance of law and order' spell the even closer drawing together in the future of these twin pillars of reaction than has been the case in the past. It is this feature of the clarification of the social tendencies in Indian society that alarms the Extremist Press, which clamours vainly for 'unity' of the whole people against the Government, long after this fictitious unity has been shattered by the development of economic forces.

The 37th Session of the National Congress met, deliberated and adjourned without committing itself to any of the heinous doctrines of moderate Social Democracy as set forth in the Vanguard Programme, and as actually incorporated in most of the modern republican governments of post-war Europe. The official and semi-official Anglo-

Indian press vented its purple indignation at the heresies contained in the Programme; the rich and compromising Moderates, from the landlords to the liberal industrialists, rallied satisfactorily to the side of authority and of 'Government by Law and Order'. Mr Joseph Baptista, officially-blessed President of the 'All-India Trade Union Congress', received the British benediction for his reiterated desire to 'maintain the Imperial connection and the inspiration of British rule', for the benefit of Indian labour. So far, so good. But every victory has its price, often so heavy as to become a Pyrrhic victory. What has it cost the astute Government of the proverbial Nation of Shopkeepers, to win this seeming triumph over the ingress of new ideas, new principles, new tactics, into the Indian movement?

In order to answer this query correctly, a bird's-eye view of the Indian press of all shades of opinion becomes necessary, as it reacted to the sensational message of Reuter, flashed out from Whitehall to Simla on 21 December, 1922. We give a few of the comments of the characteristic organs of Indian public opinion.

The Anglo-Indian Press

The Times of India, Bombay (23 December, 1922):

> There is no need to be alarmed at the attempt of M. N. Roy to convert the National Congress to the idea of turning India into a kind of Soviet Republic. He is not the first, and certainly will not be the last silly man to prescribe a badly-mixed dose of republican theory as a remedy for the ills from which he supposes India to be suffering. But we cannot believe that any body of men is prepared seriously to consider the ravings of this adventurer. Until we find we are wrong, we do not propose to examine the absurdities of his panacea. Reuter's Agency has given to Roy a publicity which is seldom accorded even to a Prime Minister's most serious utterance. Why should it have been thought worthwhile to cable three columns of Bolshevist delirium to this country?
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> (... ... ...)

Reuters' cable, published in full, is headed by the caption: *'The New India. A Bolshevist Scheme. What Will the Congress Do?'*

The Englishman, Calcutta, 22 December publishes the full cable with the heading: '*Bolshevism for India; Programme for Gaya Congress; No Landlordism*'. Its full column of editorial remarks the next day were confined to scurrilous abuse of the supposed author of the Programme, and to insinuations that Mr C. R. Das, President of the forthcoming National Congress, drew up his programme in collusion with Mr Roy.

The Statesman, Calcutta, 22 December, heads the cable:*Bolshevik Aims in India; Separation Plan; Open Revolution Advocated; Amazing Programme*. Editorially it is extremely abusive, using the political records of the Indian Criminal Investigation Department with as much freedom as the *Morning Post* uses those of Scotland Yard. The alleged author of the Programme is termed a 'blackguardly ruffian' in close touch with the leaders of the National Congress, thus connected through him with Moscow and Berlin:

'If it be rightly inferred that the Congress derives some measure of its inspiration from Manabendra Nath and his Communist friends in Moscow and Berlin, the fact should receive wide publicity, in order that everyone in India may understand the goal towards which the Congress agitation is heading. Roy's patriotism, such as it is, is nothing but the crude international Communism of Moscow. Landlordism is to be destroyed, rents are to be reduced to a minimum, all indirect taxes are to be abolished, in favour of a progressive income tax, State-aided industries are to become the order of the day, and there are to be minimum wages, an eight-hour day, workers' councils, universal profit-sharing etc. Best of all, India is to have no standing army, but the entire people will be armed to defend their freedom. These aims are to be achieved by organizing militant peasant unions throughout the country, pledged to non-payment of taxes, resistance to high-prices, mass-strikes, demonstrations and of course, the formidable* conversion to your own way of thinking of anyone who disagrees with you. If our opinion of the intellects shortly to be massed at Gaya is not quite so high as might be wished, we do not rate their owners so poorly as to suppose that they will find trash of this kind acceptable.'

The Pioneer, Allahabad, U.P. (semi-official organ) 23 December, writes, after the usual column of personal abuse and villification:

'Roy's Programme for the Indian National Congress, which was published in our issue of yesterday, includes not merely the overthrow of the present Government, but the confiscation of land, the fomenting of strikes, and the establishment of Communism. The project involves a peasant revolt against rent and taxes, to be accomplished by organizing militant peasant unions; the organization of tenants' strikes against rent in the cities; the destruction of the (Reform) Councils and various other "reforms" familiar to the Russian people. The danger involved in Bolshevik propaganda cannot be ignored, either by the Government or by those members of the community who possess a stake in the country. The Non-cooperation agitation has created an atmosphere favourable to the developent of militant lawlessness, and there are obvious and cogent reasons why the sinister proceedings of the leaders of that agitation should be actively opposed by all who are concerned in the preservation of property and the public peace.'

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* Note: (*sic*). Misprint for forcible? SNR

The Nationalist Press

Even more interesting than the official and semi-official viewpoint are the reactions of the various shades of opinion of Indian nationalism to the publication of the Programme. It is impossible to quote from all the bewildering medley of comments, but we select a few from the leading nationalist organs which can be called representative and which have most weight upon public opinion.

The Independent, Allahabad, organ of the National Congress, published a full page on 23 December, of Reuter's sensational message, which it re-interlined according to its own interpretation. The headline across the page bore the following words: '*Indian National Liberation; Programme of Reconstruction; "Advance-Guard's" Activities; Fighting Non-violent Non-cooperation*'. Its column of editorial comment on 24 December showed great penetration of the Government's object in causing such a cable to be sent, at this critical juncture. Under the title, 'A Deep Game' it comments:

'The object of the game (pursued by Reuter) is to damn the Indian National Congress as a body depending for its inspiration on Bolsheviks, and to alienate from it the sympathy of the landlords, employers, traders and professional classes. The opinions and plans of Mr Roy are quite well known to all who have read his little tract, 'India's Problem and Its Solution'. Evidently, Mr Roy has put his thoughts in the shape of a Programme. Like any other programme, it has to be judged on its merits, and we shall do so presently. But before taking up an examination of the programme, it is necessary to say a few words of the news agency which professes to be neutral in politics, but in practice takes care to see that the proletariat never has the best of it. Reuter wants the public to trace Mr Das' scheme of political work, some of which bear a surface resemblance to Mr Roy's scheme, to Bolshevik inspiration. It also invites the public to be ready to find that the Congress is influenced by the Soviet Government of Russia, and attempts to alienate the sympathies of landlords, traders and employers from the Congress.'

The Independent, which itself had often been damned by the Government and its lackey press as a 'Bolshevik' organ, but which in reality represented the viewpoint of left-wing nationalist Extremism (led by Mr Das), then proceeded to analyse the Programme and came to the conclusion that it stands condemned on its own merits, because in its plan of mass-action and a country-wide general strike, 'there is no room whatever for Love Force; our faith is in non-violent Non-Cooperation based on love force.' ...

... ...

Turning to Bengal, the home of Mr Das and Indian Extremism, we find very interesting reactions in the nationalist press, as represented by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, independent organ of Extremist Nationalism; in *The Servant*, the die-hard organ of Gandhi orthodoxy; and in *Bangalar Katha*, the vernacular daily of Mr Das' party. To quote from the medley of comment from other less characteristic journals would cover too much space.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the most powerful organ of Indian extremism in Bengal, ran a series of three editorials on three different days, reflecting three successive moods in regard to the programme and its startling appearance on the stage of Congress politics. In its issue of 23 December, after publishing the programme in full under the caption '*Separation of India from British Empire: Programme for Indian National Congress Drawn up by an Indian Communist*', it remarked editorially:

'The Manifesto published by Mr Manabendra Nath Roy and cabled to India by Reuter has set the Anglo-Indian Press dancing with rage, and given them an excuse which they were seeking to hit the Congress. The Anglo-Indian papers have vied with one another to exhaust the language of Billingsgate. The real object of the Anglo-Indian papers is transparent. They would, by hook or crook, damn the Congress. They do not discuss the merits or demerits of the Manifesto itself. But nevertheless, they are utilizing it to serve their own ends. We fail to understand why, if it is the silly outburst it is represented to be, Reuter should care to cable it across the seas, or Anglo-Indian journals should devote columns after columns of the choicest abuse to counteract its effects. For ourselves, there are many things in Mr Roy's Programme with which we do not agree, but we have no doubt that unbiased people can have no objection to some of his proposals, as for instance, the reduction of land rent to a fixed minimum, the starting of State cooperative banks, the fixing of minimum wages, protective legislation about old age, sickness and unemployment insurance, recognition of labour-unions, free and compulsory education. We believe these will be heartily supported by many. Every one is free to put forward his suggestions before the Indian National Congress and the Congress is fully at liberty to accept or reject them. But whatever may be the opinion of the Congress leaders with regard to this Manifesto, we are sure they are not going to be brow-beaten by the professed enemies of our country.'

Four days later, the same journal had another reaction, and published a long editorial, under the title, 'What Does It Mean?' Declaring that the publication of this programme at such a time, had a 'very sinister meaning' which it could not but recognize as part of a propaganda against Indian Swarajists it went on:

'If there was any reason to proscribe the Vanguard, that reason must have led the Government to censor this cable. Why was not this done? That is a very ugly question. Will the Government kindly explain? The evident object of allowing this document to be published at this time is to frighten the landowning and capitalist classes in India into coalition with the present foreign political authority in the country. There can conceivably be no other explanation of the publication of a document like this here. And our first duty is to avoid, by every possible means, antagonizing any section or class of our population at this juncture. For India to accept what may at best be described as political and economic experiments as the solution of our problem will be far from safe. What lines the National state will take in India to work out a reasonable reconciliation between the conflicting interests of landlord and tenant, of capital and labour, must be searched, discovered and adopted by us after we have secured control of our own State life. In the meantime, every section of the Indian community and every class or interest in the country must combine to work together for the elimination of the control and authority of the present foreign Bureaucracy from the life and administration of our State affairs.'

On 27 December, the *Patrika* published another editorial called 'India and Bolshevism', which, without mentioning the programme, is evidently a new light on the same problem. In a two-column exposition of the principles and programme of Communism, the *Patrika* declares boldly:

'The two main planks of the Bolshevik propaganda, namely, the elimination of the wage-system in economics and the annihilation of the present centralized class-ruled states in politics, represent therefore, the highest and most advanced ideals of modern economics and politics. So far as these ideals are concerned, Bolshevism is not a thing that can be either dismissed as criminal or even damned with faint praise. It has a soul-stirring compulsion in it. And if in India there is any danger to the established order from Bolshevism, as to which we say nothing just now, but shall discuss it later on, that danger will come, not from the imitation of the Soviet methods but from the fascination of the Bolshevik ideal.'

The Servant, Congress organ of the 'Spiritual Swarajists' and of die-hard Gandhism, published the full programme in its 23 December issue under the captions: *Proletariat Swaraj for India; Complete Separation from Britain; a Communist Programme for the Congress; Notable Opinions of Two Indians Abroad.*

It then proceeded to publish, side by side, the Programme of the Vanguard Party and the interview given by Mr Saklatwala, Indian Communist M. P. to the *Hindu* of Madras, in which he recommends the Congress to adopt labour and communist ideals. There were three editorial comments published by *The Servant* on 23, 26, 27 December. The first declared:

'Any man, be he an Indian or a foreigner, may harbour, in places far remote from India, any sort of revolutionary ideas with regard to her and it surpasses our comprehension to envisage the useful purpose of giving wide publicity to them here. Is it raking up the old Bolshevik bogey to make a case for fattening the Military Budget? Or is this so-called "Programme for the Indian National Congress" sent out here to demonstrate the complicity of the Congress with Bolshevist agencies and to discredit it in the eyes of loyal Indians and the world outside? We shall not suggest that it is directed to proving Deshbandhu (Das) as a co-adjutor of Mr Roy. The most plausible aim may be to scare away the landlordism* and capitalists from the Congress. It is said coming events cast their shadow before them. Is this news the harbinger proclaiming the coming *coup de grace*; declaring the Congress illegal as a Bolshevik Corporation, and suppressing it with a strong hand? The country should be prepared for any development.'

In its issue of 26 December, the *Servant* commented on the order of the Government of Bengal in Council, declaring forfeit to His Majesty all copies, wherever found, of vol. I, no. 5 of *The Advance-Guard,* and of a leaflet called 'A Programme for the Indian National Congress':

'Inscrutable are the ways of the Bureaucracy. It proscribes *The Advance-Guard* and checks propaganda of Mr M. N. Roy. It allows Reuter to cable out his programme to India. Today, by a notice, it proscribes the programme and confiscates any reproduction of it. Now, every newspaper office preserves the copies that remain after the day's sale. Is it to throw them into the fire? Will every reader be required to find his copy out and destroy it? The mystery is that the programme was allowed to be published just before the Congress session commenced, and it is proscribed just after the Presidential address has become known to the public.'

Later, *The Servant* declared:

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* Note: (*Sic*). Misprint obviously for 'landlords'. SNR

'The publication of the message of Mr. Roy, the Communist, just on the eve of the Congress, is deliberately made to bring into discredit Deshbandhu Das, president of the Congress, and consequently, the Congress and the movement it has espoused for the present (the labour movement). Already the fire-eating die-hard press here and in England has emptied its vocabulary of abuse and invectives upon the devoted head of Mr Roy. It is not necessary for them to consider the programme on its own merits. It is enough that it has been called Bolshevik, drawn up by a Communist. It is a sorry subterfuge to pit the capitalists and the landlords against the Congress, a stupid camouflage to suppress it.'

In view of the fact that the general consensus of opinion was that the Government aimed the programme of the Vanguard Party at the head of Mr C. R. Das, whose own programme, published several weeks previously, contained many clauses of a socialist nature, a special interest attaches to the comments of his daily Bengali organ, the *Bangalar Katha* (Voice of Bengal). On 23 December it wrote:

'The Indian revolutionary, M. N. Roy, who had to leave India for political charges, joined the Bolshevik Party, and has submitted a number of propositions for the consideration of the Gaya Congress. His object is to sever all imperial connections immediately, and to win complete independence for India. He also approves of the policy of entering the Councils in order to wreck them.'

The leading article in the 24 December number of *Bangalar Katha* summarized the Programme, stressing the social clauses, without mentioning the political side. Concluding the summary, it remarked:

'According to Manabendra Nath Roy, the real task of the Congress is to organize the people in order that the ideal held out in the Programme can be realized. He thinks that to paralyse the Government by means of a country-wide general strike can be possible only in this way. He has no faith in the principle of Non-violence advocated by the Congress. We do not agree entirely with this programme. The class which will be victorious in a conflict between classes will lord it over the rest. That state of affairs cannot be called the freedom of the whole country. We want freedom for the entire Indian people—we are not content with the liberation of a particular class.

The amusing things is that the Anglo-Indian press is delighted to find a partial similarity of the programme published by us with that of Manabendra. They want to prove that we have connection with Moscow through some underground channel. Otherwise, how can the two programmes coincide?'

Further on, it declared:

'The Anglo-Indian press has detected a great coincidence in the similarity of our programme with that of the exiled Manabendra.

Nath. Taking it for granted that our programme is a creation of Deshbandhu Das, our contemporaries say in great glee, "Now Mr Das is caught. It is clear from where he copied his programme. The Soviet Government is Mr Das' Adviser!" We marvel at such logic. The Programme published in the *Banglar Katha* was outlined in the statement of Deshbandhu Das made at Amraoti more than a month ago. Already in the Bengal Provincial Conference of 1917 Deshbandhu suggested the necessity of organizing labour unions and peasant councils. These are the points on which our programme agrees with Mr Roy's and about which our contemporaries are so hilarious.'

The *Hindu* of Madras, one of the largest and most powerful nationalist dailies, remarked editorially in its 22 December issue, under the caption 'A Futile Effort':

'It may be news to Reuter to know that the Manifesto he has taken so much pains to cable to us, is but one of a series of propagandist efforts of the Indian revolutionaries, who are as actively opposed to the basic doctrines of Non-cooperation as are the Moderates; that some of these documents have been prohibited from time to time by the Government, and that finally, the actual manifesto, the forwarding of which by Reuter has cost him or somebody else a pretty penny, has been in our hands for some time and treated by us with the importance it deserves. We know it suits the ulterior purposes of the enemy of our movement to say that it has behind it Russian gold. That lie was sedulously propagated some time ago and was promptly nailed to the mast. The Congress has not the slightest intention of going Bolshevik.'

We will conclude these citations from the Indian Nationalist Press with one from *The Mussulman,* an influential Calcutta weekly, and organ of Mohammedan extremist opinion. In its 29 December issue, it wrote:

'The Programme advocates the abolition of landlordism and confiscation of all large estates, *without any compensation*. It is a silly proposal. It advocates nationalization of all public utilities. The acceptance of the proposal means the destruction of all charitable and religious endowments. Neither Muslims nor Hindus will tolerate such interference. The proposal of universal suffrage, if adopted, would mean chaos. Countries which have been enjoying parliamentary institutions for centuries have not yet been able to extend the franchise to every man and woman. The fixing of an eight-hour day for five and a half days a week as the maximum duration of work for all labourers, including agricultural labourers, would instead of furthering their interests, be prejudicial to them and would not, we think, be in the best interests of the country.'

The Moderate Press

For lack of space, we will quote from but two characteristic organs of the cooperating Moderates, whose programme is 'Self-Government within the British Empire, to be attained by constitutional and gradual means'. *The Leader,* Allahabad, U. P., the leading organ of the Liberal League, comments in its issue of 24 December under the heading 'Revolution and Reaction':

'The programme is drawn up in accordance with the modified principles of Bolshevism, and is intended to appeal to the cupidity and self-interests of the masses. Self-government within the British Empire does not mean anything to this Indian revolutionary, who wants to strike at the roots of capitalism in India. The Liberals are described as "renegade patriots". The familiar tactics of revolutionaries are to draw up a very attractive picture of an Utopia, and then to prescribe methods of direct action to establish it. We neither believe in Utopias nor in the efficacy of direct action for attaining them. In the existing conditions of India, attempts at revolution would lead to a terrible reaction.'

Justice, Madras organ of the ultra-Moderates, which has modestly arrogated to itself the distinction of becoming a future Social Democratic Party in India 'to combat Bolshevism', receives the democratic suggestions contained in the programme in the following vein:

'So far as we can see, Mr Roy's programme is diametrically opposed to Mahatma Gandhi's scheme, over which the Congress went mad some time ago. Where Mr Gandhi wants everybody to adopt the Charka and handloom and live a life of primitive simplicity, Mr Roy advises his countrymen to encourage modern industries by every means within their power, but with the proviso that the profits should go to the working men only. Mr Gandhi wants India to boycott education, but Mr Roy's plan is to make education free and compulsory. Mr Gandhi is for ahimsa and non-violence, while Mr Roy is for bloodshed and anarchy. In fact, the ideal of Swaraj aimed at by the Indian National Congress under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, and the communistic ideal expounded by Mr Roy are as poles asunder. Neither Mr Roy nor any others need have any hope or apprehension that the Congress will jump at this easy way of attaining Swaraj through revolution. Many followers of Mr Gandhi have come to realize that his programme has been a futile one, and they are now gravitating, not towards a communistic revolution, but towards the constitution established by law in the country.'

Such, in short, is a summary of the immense volume of comment and speculation that filled the Indian press of all shades of opinion upon the publication of the Vanguard programme through Reuter acting under manifest Government provocation. 'Imperialism, mad with rage, destroys itself'. Though the immediate objects of the Government were achieved; though the Congress abstained from any discussion of the programme, and distinguished itself by the endorsement of the socially reactionary doctrines of orthodox Gandhism; though the Landlords' Association rallied satisfactorily to the side of the Government, and the Conference of the Liberal League strongly disavowed any sympathies with the 'revolutionary' Non-cooperators; though the Extremist Press, in its fright and concern to whitewash itself from any and every sign of approval or collaboration with the nefarious document, stooped to swell the Government chorus of personal abuse and vilification,—despite all these temporary phenomena of an immediate triumph, the publication of the Vanguard Programme will in the end destroy this seeming victory. The Government, driven mad with rage and fear, saw fit to force the issue, and to hurl upon the country in the most spectacular possible manner, the full programme of national liberation and reconstruction which the Vanguard Party so sedulously desired to propagate, labouring at an immense distance and under insuperable difficulties, to reach the listening ears of India's insurgent millions. The repudiation of the programme by the compromising Moderates and Tory landlords was a foregone conclusion. It was not at this social element that the programme was aimed. Its disownment by the Congress was likewise inevitable, constituted as that body is of the petty bourgeoisie, crushed between the upper and nether millstones of government oppression and capitalist monopoly on one hand, and the rising tide of mass energy on the other. What has happened is just this. Throughout the length and breadth of India has been heralded, for the first time in the history of the Nationalist struggle, a clarion call to emancipation, towards a definite goal, with the plain and logical steps towards the achievement of that goal indicated in a clear and unmistakable manner. It is for those truly revolutionary elements scattered throughout the country to pay heed and respond to that call, to press the propaganda, so spectacularly inaugurated, among the only elements of the society capable of responding to it with enthusiasm and of carrying the programme to completion,—the workers and peasants of India. Such a propaganda, prosecuted with vigour among these discontented and truly revolutionary masses, will meet, not with repudiation and timid disclaimers, but with instant and wholehearted enthusiasm and response. Young India, take up the challenge so insolently thrown in your face by a cunning Bureaucracy. Meet the issue squarely, and press with vigour the programme indicated, and so prove the truth of the maxim, 'Imperialism, mad with rage, destroys itself'.

CHAPTER XIII

Open Letter To C. R. Das*

The 37th Annual Session of the National Congress at Gaya marked the close of an historic period in our struggle for liberation. The social tendencies that constituted the innate weakness of our movement during the last two years still reign supreme in the Congress. The consequences are easily to be anticipated: Non-cooperation as a political force is dead, that is, that orthodox brand of Non-cooperation which makes religion out of politics and has turned the traditional organ of National Struggle (the Congress) into a prayer-hall and conclave of theologians. This brand of Non-cooperation is dead, notwithstanding the fact that the die-hards of this school won the day at Gaya. It sounds paradoxical; but it is true none the less.

Although Gaya failed to be as dramatic as Surat, the results have hardly been otherwise. The reactionary elements have gained an apparent ascendancy, not by dint of their own merits, but because the opposition failed to marshall its forces in the proper way, and took its stand on an insecure ground. This is, however, a transition period.

After 1907, the impotency of the Moderates became palpable and the stalwarts of the old Congress fell willing victims to the 'rallying' order of Morley. Of course, it is evident that no such glorious fate awaits the orthodox Non-cooperators of the 'No-change' party. They may shout at the top of their voices that they do not want such glory; but the truth is that the Government wants their cooperation much less than they want government's favour. So the bankruptcy of die-hard Gandhism will be exposed in a different way, if it is still to be exposed. If in the near future there does not appear in the political field a new party with a clearly formulated programme, inspired, not by sloppy sentimentalism, but by a revolutionary social outlook and firm grasp of the situation, the Congress under the leadership of the 'victorious' No-change party will sink into oblivion and imbecility no less despicable than that overtaking the Moderates shortly after the split at Surat. And if such a party does take the field, as is historically inevitable, the apparent triumph of religious quietism in our political movement will be very short-lived, and the Congress will be ere long rescued from its rut.

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* The 'Open Letter to Chitta Ranjan Das and his Followers' signed by M. N. Roy and dated Zurich, Switzerland, 3 February 1923, was originally enclosed in a two-column four-page format with *The Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 1, 15 February, 1923. SNR

A great crisis has been pressing upon our movement ever since the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress. It would have come to a head probably at Ahmedabad, had not the attention of the country been diverted by the policy of relentless repression, which clapped all the forward-looking leaders, including the President-elect of the Congress, into jail. At last the crisis is over. The Congress has succumbed. The crisis lasted too long and therefore, the depression and disintegration have been too great. But the very process of disintegration has at the same time clarified the situation, giving impetus to the energies which will eventually dissipate the depression. New attempts have already been made to resuscitate the Congress. But most of the elements making these attempts are still groping in the dark.

Two Ways Ahead

There are but two ways ahead: reversion to the Constitutional Democracy of the Liberals, or adoption of more revolutionary methods. To choose one of the two ways has been the fundamental issue that gave birth to the controversy that rent the Congress during the last half a year; and it was precisely this problem that had to be solved at Gaya. The victory of the die-hard quietists signifies that the problem still remains unsolved, at least in part. The intellectually bankrupt lower middle-class is, on the one hand, debarred from the Heavens of Constitutional Democracy, owing to its economic disability, and on the other hand, its reactionary social and religious prejudices give it a counter-revolutionary ideology. It is this social element that still holds the balance of power in the Congress ranks. The eventual overthrow of this pernicious influence is conditional upon a clear grouping of elements in the Pro-change Party, which today embraces two centripetal forces, one heading towards Constitutional Democracy in the garb of Rationalism, the other inclined towards a revolutionary outlook, but this inclination is still largely sentimental. This confusion in the Pro-change camp gave a temporary victory to the tendencies objectively dead, but which nevertheless can still appeal to the imagination of purely sentimental revolutionaries.

There are two tendencies demanding a change of the Congress programme. There is nothing in common between them except that both demand a change. But the character of the change sought for by one is diametrically opposite to that demanded by the other. This was not made clear at Gaya; hence the defeat of the Left Wing led by Chittaranjan Das, which failed to attract under its banner the sentimental revolutionaries in the ranks of the 'No-change' party. These elements looked upon the Left Wing with suspicion, because the latter failed to stand out separately from the 'Pro-change' party of the Right—the Mahratta radicals who advocated 'Responsive Co-operation'. So, it is clear that the orthodox 'No-changers' secured not a victory, but a walk-over. This state of affairs will not last. The Left must part company with the Right, and in proportion as it asserts its revolutionary potentiality upon the situation, the Centre will collapse. If the social forces destined to lead our movement in the new historical period are not soon mobilized, Moderatism in the garb of the wordy Extremism of the Mahratta Radicals will reconquer the political field. This will mean a great set-back to the movement. Should this be permitted?

The Three Social Elements within the Congress

There are three distinct social elements operating in the national movement as represented by the Congress, namely, the upper middle-class including the intellectuals, the lower middle-class (small traders, petty intellectual workers etc.), and the masses of workers and peasants. The first stands very close to the cooperating Liberals. In fact most of them blundered into the Non-cooperation Movement, and have always lent a rather half-hearted adhesion to it. Their quarrel consists in that the Reforms Act did not make sufficient provision for the interests of their class. Hence their opposition to the Reforms. Today they oppose the Non-cooperation programme, not because it is not revolutionary enough to meet the situation, but because it is not 'rational'. But there is no such curious thing as a rational revolution, and Swaraj can be won only through a revolution. An extension of the Reforms, or at the most, something on the model of the Irish Free State or Egyptian Independence, will satisfy the ambition of this section of our people. They are firm believers in the theories of Democracy, Social Contract, Free Competition, Parliamentarism and all the rest of the paraphernalia of Capitalism, which is breaking down under the pressure of its own contradictions all over the world.

The lower middle-class, apparently led by the petty intellectuals, but in reality dominated by a reactionary religious and theological ideal, is in an unenviable position. Economically it is totally ruined. It has no hope from the present system. No amount of reforms will affect its position. Therefore it talks about a radical change. But a progressive change will not be beneficial for it either, because it will only drag this class down to the level of proletarians. Hence its frantic antipathy towards modern developments. It would like to see the society hark back to those primitive conditions to which it ascribes the glories of the Golden Age. The bankrupt lower middle-class must have a radical change, but its members are against disturbing the social *status quo*. Their position is very equivocal.

Neither of these two middle-class elements represents the interests of the third social factor, which constitutes such a vital part of the nation and which in the last two years has played such an important role in the movement. This third factor is the masses of workers and peasants. Everybody of late talks about the 'masses'. But no middle-class party can be expected to fight under the slogan: 'Not the Masses for Revolution, but Revolution for the Masses'. Middle-class libertarians will never attain such a revolutionary outlook as to look on the working-class, not as the pawns in the game, but as the very life of out struggle. Therefore, it is inevitable that the revolutionary energy of the toiling masses, who constitute the vast majority of the nation and without whose conscious action Swaraj cannot be won, will be focussed through an independent political party. To raise the standard of this party, the future leader of our struggle for national liberation, is the task objectively undertaken by the Left Wing of the Pro-change Party. It is necessary to face the facts, however unpleasant they may be; we cannot make them non-existent by overlooking them.

The Crystallization of Political Parties within the National Congress

We must recognize the fact that it is the conflict of class interests that simultaneously strengthens and weakens our movement. This lesson ought to have been learnt by all forward-looking people by this time. In other words, it must have become evident that India is not free from those inexorable laws of history which give rise to great revolutions in particular epochs. The confusion of the last year, as well as the present decomposition and process of regrouping of forces within the Congress, are brought about by the operation of these laws. Several social elements with discordant interests went into the composition of the Non-cooperation Movement. There were certain things superficially in common; therefore, they could work in apparent harmony for a certain length of time. But the development of the impelling forces is followed by the clarification of the ideology of the movement. The objective of the respective classes becomes clearer, consequently, it becomes impossible for them to remain as integral part of one and the same cohesive political apparatus. It becomes necessary for each of them to formulate its particular aims and aspirations in the shape of a programme. The Congress has never been a compact political organ reflecting an identical social interest. It has become less so in the last years, when the nationalist movement transcended the limits of the so-called 'politically-minded' classes. The movement, however, cannot be carried further without cohesive political parties as the vanguards of the several social classes which are objectively antagonistic to the imperialist exploitation. The Congress will serve only as the rallying ground for these nationalist forces, the most revolutionary of which will eventually assume its leadership and bring the struggle for national liberation to the final victory. The present decomposition of the Congress will be followed by the rise of these political parties.

The Need for a Revolutionary Peoples' Party

During the last twelve months, that is ever since the initial enthusiasm began to subside in the movement, the struggle for power has been going on inside the Congress ranks. The three principal social elements that enter into the composition of the Congress have been struggling to capture the supremacy. This struggle at last culminated in the split at Gaya. But the present schism in the Congress ranks bases itself upon the conflict between the upper middle-class rationalists and the lower middle-class revivalists. The third element, that is, the toiling masses, which is destined to decide ultimately the fate of the nation, is still practically left out of the struggle. Nevertheless, the fundamental issue involved in the transition through which the Congress is passing is not the conflict between the upper and lower strata of the middle-class. Neither of these two elements is able or willing to rise up to that height of revolutionary outlook which is required to drag the Congress out of the miserable rut into which it has sunk under the leadership of the lower middle-class spiritualists, and to save it from the sure reversion to the programme of Constitutional Democracy, which will follow the triumph of upper middle-class rationalism. The problem we are called upon to solve was tersely enunciated by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan, when he questioned the ability of the middle-classes to make Non-cooperation effective, and boldly declared that the masses wanted Swaraj more than the bourgeoisie. In short, the historic question put to the revolutionary nationalists today is: *Is purely bourgeois politics capable of developing our struggle for liberation?* The experience of the last two years has amply proved that the answer can be safely given in the negative. Hence it follows that the social basis of the movement must be radically changed. In other words, the change in the Non-cooperation programme must transcend the limits of substituting lower middle-class confusion by upper middle-class radicalism. The change should be so formulated as *actively to involve in the movement those social forces that are bound to be uncompromisingly revolutionary, namely, the workers and peasants*—those who have nothing to lose, but a world to gain. The future belongs to this element. The time has come for the organization of these objectively revolutionary elements in a political party of its (*sic*) own, which will be the great Peoples' Party of India. The organization of this party, the future leader of the struggle for national independence, is the task of those who stand for a change, but for a forward-looking change in the Congress Programme.

The Propertied Classes are the Basis of the Present Order

You have undertaken this historic mission of liberating our movement from the fetters of middle-class reaction, compromise, hesitation and timidity, in order to transplant it on to the healthy soil of revolutionary mass-action. But you will fail to accomplish this mission if the objective forces asserting themselves on the social background of our movement are not taken into proper and proportionate consideration. There is room for only three parties in the Congress. Two are already in the field. You have to be either the third, that is, the political expression of the working masses, or nothing. Your reluctance to recognize the existence of class-conflict and to admit the inevitability of class-struggle betrays the haziness of your social outlook. It behoves a party of those social elements that benefit by class-domination to denounce class-struggle as dangerous to the society, and piously to preach class-collaboration, but those inspired by the revolutionary ideal of socio-economic liberation for all cannot subscribe to this ruling-class philosophy without betraying their ideal. Has not Deshbandhu Das himself declared against substituting the foreign bureaucracy by its native prototype? If he will look a bit deeper into things he will discover who stands behind the bureaucratic governments. It is the *propertied classes*, owning all the means of production and distribution and consequently exploiting the expropriated majority. Therefore, by declaring war upon the present governmental system Mr Das admits the necessity of destroying the authority of the class that stands behind it, as otherwise the character of the modern bourgeois State cannot be changed, and Mr Das' socio-political ideal will never come out of the realm of Utopia. We are not manufacturing the spectre of class-war. It is raging in the civilized society, based on private property. We Communists stand for the abolition of classes and consequently of class-struggle; but *classes cannot disappear unless private property is abolished*. And can any reasonable person believe that the class benefiting by the system of private property will ever consent to its abolition without a struggle, however sanguinary it may be? No amount of humanitarian sermons will induce its members to forego the smallest part of the profits and privileges that accrue from ownership. Hence, to organize the expropriated and exploited workers and peasants, but not on the principles of class-interests and class-struggle, is to deceive them; to preach to the victims of class tyranny virtuous doctrines of the 'Ideal of Human Unity', 'class collaboration for the common benefit of the community' etc., etc., only perpetuates class domination.

We dwell somewhat at length on the question of classes and class-struggle, not that we give precedence to the Civil War over the National War, but because your party entertains a very subjective and prejudiced attitude on the matter. This constitutes a serious weakness for the young party, which thus fails to strike an anchor in the depths of the society. If you propose to lead a certain class of our society in the National War, you cannot do so without defining clearly how the *interests* of the particular class will be advanced by the successful prosecution of the National War. The Non-cooperation Movement so far failed to do so; hence its failure to secure permanently the active support of the masses. Your party should not commit the same mistake if it is to carry the struggle further on.

The Issue of Council-Entry is A Secondary One

Now, lamentable aversion to class conflict led the pioneers of your party somewhat astray. Lack of realistic vision prevented you from grasping the true significance of the breach in the Congress ranks. Consequently, you greatly prejudiced your otherwise strong position by an equivocal attitude towards the radicals of the extreme Right. It is deplorable that you forced the issue at Gaya on the secondary question of Council-entry. You surely do not believe that the future of our movement depends on whether we contest the coming elections or not! Your attitude towards the question of Council-entry has its tactical value, but this tactical value also becomes problematical, if there does not exist a revolutionary party which will send its members to the polls with a concerted programme, and will back their actions in the Councils by means of mass action outside. Then, the tactics of 'Wrecking the Councils' presupposes the chances of returning a majority, which are not very bright. So long as there does not exist a well-organized party, it is premature for revolutionaries to make the question of Council-entry the point of issue. None but the party with a revolutionary outlook and a large following among the masses can carry on successfully the tactics of 'wrecking and obstruction'. Otherwise the consequence is likely to be reprehensible, namely, the 'responsive cooperation' of the Mahratta Party, which is hardly distinguishable from the Liberals. The difference between the 'responsive cooperators' and the Liberals is as fictitious as that between the Tories and Liberals in the British Parliament concerning Colonial affairs. But do we need the luxury of such party politics when the playground is but an empty show?

Your leaders failed to disassociate themselves from the 'Pro-change' elements of the Right Wing because they did not recognize the significance of the diversity of social interests behind the two wings of the 'Pro-change' party. Had your programme not revolved on the pivot of Council-entry its other clauses would have attracted all the available revolutionary elements within and without the Congress, and the Congress today would have stood clear of the stifling atmosphere of lower middle-class reaction and inanity. Given a clear understanding of the cross-currents of the social forces actuating our movement, you are the vanguard of the Revolutionary Mass Party, which is the crying need of the day, and which alone will save the Congress from the disgraceful fate of sinking into the neo-liberalism of the Mahratta politicians on the one hand, and on the other, from the equally disgraceful fate of surrendering itself to the imbecile leadership of ultra-Gandhism, which unconsciously plays the role of the handmaid of social reaction.

You should have made your position at Gaya unequivocal. You should have repudiated openly any possible relation based upon identity of interests with those advocates of 'change' who, in the name of rationalism and practical politics, would turn the Congress into a respectable party of the upper middle-class in tussle with the big bourgeoisie. Then the reactionary religious nationalists would not have had the chance of rallying a large section of the sentimentally revolutionary element by artfully harping on the tune of 'the masses'. But the shallowness of their affection for the masses was exposed by their failure to respond to the revolutionary note struck by Mr Das in his statement: 'We do not want a bourgeois republic'. And they become the standard-bearers of rank reaction when through the mouth of Rajagopalacharya, on the authority of the Mahatma, they denounce 'any scheme to make political use of the workers'. What a preposterous theory! But everyone pretending to advocate the cause of the masses, while blinking at the ugly features of class interests, eventually lands in this reprehensible position.

The True Nature of the Split at Gaya

The net result at Gaya, however, was that in the din of the clash between upper-and middle-class interests, the revolutionary voice of the workers and peasants, raised through the de-classed Chittaranjan, was drowned. Unfortunately the fight did not take place on the issue of *bourgeois politics* versus *mass politics* but of upper middle-class politics as against lower middle-class confusion as well as rowdyism. Apparently the latter has won, but it is the contrary as a matter of fact. The upper middle-class rationalists of the Mahratta school will pursue their own line of action, in spite of the Congress decision, and the latter will be left without any intellectual leadership on the one hand and bereft of revolutionary dynamics on the other. Meanwhile, no clear avenue has been cut out for the only truly revolutionary forces to assert themselves upon the movement. If the next twelve months are allowed to pass by without seeing the growth of a Left Wing Party with a clear consciousness of its own social nature, we can be sure that in its next annual session, the Congress will be hardly distinguishable from the Liberal League or the Home Rule show of Mrs Besant.

The voice that spoke through Deshbandhu Chittaranjan and his associates is presumably embodied in the Congress Khilafat Swaraj Party, which has been inaugurated by issuing the manifesto, signed by a number of the leaders of the 'Pro-change' faction. But in reality, the Deshbandhu with his revolutionary following again finds himself in the minority, because the majority of the new party, which appears to be formed under his leadership, subscribes much less to the socio-political views of Mr Das than do the die-hards of the 'No-change' cult, who remain in the control of the Congress machinery. The result of such a combination can and will be either that Mr Das will soon have to abandon his original position in favour of the 'Responsive Cooperation' of the Mahratta rationalists, or that he will have to part company with them in order to organize the third party inside the National Congress, the party which will reflect clearly the uncompromisingly revolutionary elements of our society, and which will infuse vigour into the national struggle by means of revolutionary mass action.

The Necessity for a Second Split

This equivocal position will be cleared by a second split in the Congress camp. To force this inevitable separation of the revolutionary forces from the embrace of the Right Wing, which will bring the Congress back practically under the influence of Liberalism, is the task before you. Only by breaking away from the Right Wing, which in the name of rationalism has repudiated the tactics of militant Non-cooperation, your party will stand out as the vanguard of the National Army, the leader of the National Struggle, and in this role will liberate the Congress from the control of the religious die-hards, by attracting to its ranks all the sincere elements left in the folds of the 'Non-change' party.

3 February 1923.

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Ourselves*

In India today we hear everybody talk about the 'masses'. There is not a political group which does not claim to stand for the welfare of the common people. To talk approvingly of organizing labour and uplifting the peasantry has become a fashion in political circles. The Congress has gone so far as to admit the necessity of giving serious attention to the Trade Union movement and there is even a proposal to subsidize it out of the Congress Fund. The Gaya Congress has appointed a Committee to work out a scheme for this work. Ever since the Non-cooperation Movement, based only on the sacrifice and patriotism of the middle classes, became threadbare, our leaders suddenly remembered the existence of those more than eighty per cent of our people whose needs, interests, power and potentialities did not enter into the calculation of those who planned to paralyse the government by National Non-Cooperation. A resolution was adopted at Nagpur, vaguely referring to the working class; that resolution, however, not only remained a dead letter, but in practice the Congress has always acted against the interests of the toiling masses. On every occasion that it had to choose between the propertied upper classes and the expropriated toilers, the Congress defended the cause of the former, notwithstanding the fact that the patriotism of the upper classes has always been half-hearted and that it was on account of the spontaneous action of the rebellious masses that the Non-cooperation Movement ever attained any degree of success. We have repeatedly pointed out, and can just as well do so once more, that the Congress started rapidly on the decline when it fatally denounced the country-wide mass action during the visit of the Prince of Wales, and after having camouflaged its real intentions by idle threats of Civil Disobedience at Ahmedabad, came out openly at Bardoli as the avowed champion of vested interests and landlordism. It was the spontaneous mass upheaval that brought the Non-cooperation Movement to the pinnacle of its glory towards the end of 1921, and it was its terror of the rising tide of revolution, its reluctance to countenance such a turn in the campaign, and its decision to denounce the rebellious masses in order to secure the promised financial support of the merchants, manufacturers and landlords, that deprived the Non-cooperation Movement of its involuntary revolutionary character and have at last brought it down to the abyss of confusion, disintegration and demoralization.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II No. 1, 15 February 1923, Editorial. SNR

When one looks at this present tendency to talk of the 'masses', to swear by the 'masses', to invoke the sacred interests of the 'masses' in order to justify one or the other political principle, and even to idealize the 'masses' by discovering a 'spiritual awakening' in the grim battles these poor devils are fighting against enormous odds, when one looks at this sudden love for the 'masses' in the light of the last two years' experience, one cannot be but sceptical. There is a motive behind it all. History has taught our leaders some wholesome lessons. They have found out to their discomfiture that the property-owning and intellectual elite is after all not the salt of the Earth. It is gradually dawning upon them that the overwhelming majority of the nation, not belonging to the 'politically minded classes', can be left out of consideration only to the detriment of the movement. Hence the sudden enthusiasm for the 'masses'. From the government on the one hand, to the Extreme Nationalists on the other, every political group engaged in the struggle for either maintaining or conquering power is desirous of posing as the defender of the majority. The British Imperialists say that they cannot leave India, because in that case there will be no power to protect the interest of the masses against the depredations of the greedy landlords and moneylenders. The Liberals claim to save the masses from the disruptive propaganda of the Non-cooperators by means of such democratic institutions as the Aman Sabhas, Social Service League, Non-Brahmin Party, Civil Guards, Citizens' Welfare League etc. The orthodox Non-cooperators propose to regenerate the masses by such magical feats as the crying down of industrialism, the revival of the Charka, the abolition of the drink habit and the removal of Untouchability by ethical persuasion. The political Extremist would defend the interests of the wage-earner by means of parliamentary action and the collaboration of capital and labour, while the Romantic Nationalists plan to liberate the masses by reviving the Panchayats, which they curiously look upon as the most advanced democratic institution ever created on the face of the earth. But only one motive inspires all these elements with their affection for the masses. Every one of them desires to enlist the tacit support of the 'dumb millions', so that the articulate few comprising their own respective ranks can lay down the law in the name of that fictitious term, the 'majority'. If both the principal factions in the Congress are talking of the 'masses' and admitting the necessity of organizing labour, it is because they have found out that the National Struggle cannot be carried any farther ahead exclusively with the efforts, however powerful and disinterested, of the middle classes. They have also found out the injuriousness of calling upon the masses to sacrifice for the nation without doing anything to further their economic interests. This mistake gave the government and the Loyal Liberals a point of attack. When the Congress remained utterly indifferent to the economic struggle into which the workers and peasants were forced by the pressure of circumstances, the government and the Liberals resorted to various stratagems with the object of appearing as the champion of the everyday interests of the toiling masses. Had not the objective conditions been so entirely favourable to a spontaneous social upheaval, the designs of the government, in league with the 'law and order' loving Moderates and the reactionary landlords, would have succeeded in pacifying the country by means of some reformist labour and land legislation. But, unfortunately, this can no longer be done. The economic position of the Indian wage-earner and poor cultivator is undermined to such an extent that no patch-work can even superficially allay their miseries. Therefore, in spite of the willful negligence of the Nationalists on the one hand, and the artful designs of the government together with the loyalists on the other, the discontent among the workers and peasants will inevitably grow. This discontent is the objective factor making for a national revolution. The development of the national struggle depends upon the intensification of this factor.

We do not overlook the other objective factors that also contribute to the National Struggle. These are: 1. the vigorous growth of a native capitalist class, which constitutes a standing menace to the Imperialist monopoly over the economic and consequently the political life of the country; 2. the economic and political disabilities imposed upon the progressive intelligentsia, whose development as a class cannot take place within the framework of a foreign bureaucracy, and which, therefore, demands a National State; and 3. the pauperization of the lower middle class, which must choose between degeneration or revolution. All these factors of National Revolution have their respective value and have been playing their respective role in our history. The history of our National movement has however proved that, owing to a peculiar combination of forces the first, which is most revolutionary of all, is bound to compromise with the Imperialist domination; therefore, the other two, which are greatly dependent upon the first, are automatically deprived of much of their revolutionary significance. The Non-cooperation Movement was the best that, under the given circumstances, could be expected of these two factors in our National Struggle.

The new orientation towards the 'masses', with whatever motive and under whatever guise it may be, proves that the social basis of the national movement must be extended; that it cannot succeed as a middle-class movement. The fourth social factor, the most revolutionary of all, the one that is bound to be uncompromising and unrelenting in the struggle, because it has nothing to lose, but a world to gain, must be brought to bear upon the situation. *The Communist Party of India* through its organs has during the last year pointed out this historical necessity, and urged upon the Congress to widen its political vision. But many illusions had to be dissipated, many a bitter experience had to be lived through before this bitter dose could be swallowed. Today the country is ringing with the cry 'to the masses'. Some of the leaders go so far as to declare that the middle classes are not capable of carrying the Non-cooperation Movement to its logical conclusion. All this is very encouraging; but the leopard does not change its spots. With all its desire to enlist the support of the masses, and with all its virtuous schemes of uplifting the down-trodden, the Congress as a body will remain a bourgeois political organ. It will never be able to lead the workers and peasants in the revolutionary struggle for national freedom. The Gaya Resolution will go hardly any farther than its predecessor adopted at Nagpur. But the fact remains that the unwillingness of the propertied upper classes and the inability of the intellectual middle classes to fight resolutely the battles of national freedom have been exposed. Therefore, the organization of a party of the workers and peasants has become an indispensable necessity. *The Communist Party of India* is called upon by history to play this role.

The middle class leaders have acknowledged their defeat; if not in words, they have done it in deed. Except the incorrigible reactionaries, all admit, in one way or another, that further development of the National Struggle demands conscious action of the toiling masses. They are all in the market bidding for the support of the 'masses'. None of them, however, is going to get it, because their instinctive class-affiliation prevents them from having a revolutionary social outlook. The very fact that even the most outspoken protagonists of mass-action, as against petty bourgeois confusion, still shudder at the thought of class-interests and class-conflict, proves the incapability of any bourgeois party to assume the leadership of such revolutionary mass-action as will drag the national struggle out of the present rut. No mass movement can be developed on the reactionary principle of class collaboration. The workers and peasants can be led consciously into a revolutionary fight only with such tactics as will intensify the discontent bred in their ranks by economic exploitation. The theory of class collaboration under the pretext of national interests will always lead us back to the fatal days of Bombay, Malagaon, Chauri Chaura, Guntur and Bardoli. The preservation of national interests always means the safety of vested interests. And any rebellion of the toiling masses cannot be made without threatening the safety of the vested interests. The British government has won the loyalty of the upper classes by guaranteeing security of property; since the Congress has proved itself equally anxious for property rights, it cannot lead a revolutionary movement any more than the government. Hence the talk about the 'masses' warrants the appearance of the *Communist Party* as a factor in the National Struggle. Let all those desiring to see our country free, because without national freedom the conditions of the majority of the people cannot be improved, join us. It is only under the banner of the Communist Party that the masses can be organized and led into the national struggle as the first stage of a great revolutionary movement for liberation. So, those who sincerely stand for the interest and welfare of the toiling masses must swell the ranks of the Communist Party, the leader of the workers and peasants—the *Vanguard* of National Revolution.

The Programme of the Communist Party is already published. We fight under the banner of that Programme which has driven terror into the hearts of the Imperialists. Our first object is to secure *national freedom* for the people of India. We will fight as a part of the National Congress; by fearless criticism, vigorous agitation and constant propaganda we will endeavour to push the middle class nationalists forward in the struggle; we will cooperate with every social element that is objectively antagonistic to the imperialist domination; and we will stand shoulder to shoulder with every political party so long as it carries on the struggle against foreign domination. Our watch-word is '*No Compromise*'. We will expose mercilessly all attempts to betray the national cause under such pretexts as 'Equal Partnership', 'Change of Heart' and the like. We will force the Congress to declare boldly for a *Republican India* completely separated from imperialist domination.

We will lead this fight under the slogan of '*Not the masses for revolution, but revolution for the masses*'.

Open Letter To the Executive Committee of the British Labour Party*

Gentlemen,

Out of the 228 men sent up for trial in connection with the riots in the village of Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces, 172 have been condemned to death by imperialist justice, and an appeal is pending.

The history of the case may be known to you. In the winter of 1921-22, the discontent among the poor peasantry of the United Provinces where feudalism reigns supreme under the protection of the British government, was very acute. In many a place, this discontent broke out into open revolt against the oppression of landlordism. The British Government, which always poses as the protector of the tenant, and has given some legal shape to this pretension in order to secure the 'loyalty' of the peasant masses, did not however hesitate a moment to send armed forces, as soon as the 'life and property' of the landowners were menaced by the poor cultivators, driven by hunger to revolt. Thus, the traditional illusion of the Indian peasantry about the 'benevolence' of the sirkar was shaken, and they found themselves face to face with the forces of state coercion, allied with tyrannical landlordism. This combination of forces led up to the incident at Chauri Chaura, which was brought about by police provocation.

The men, arrested after the Chauri Chaura riot, and after the outbreaks that subsequently spread in the surrounding districts had been suppressed by the unrestrained use of bayonets and other forms of terrorism, were charged with the 'murder' of a number of policemen at Chauri Chaura. Twenty-two policemen were killed in the affray, but the dispensers of imperialist justice conveniently overlooked the fact that it began by policemen firing on peaceful demonstrators, and that the number of men killed and wounded by firing volleys into a crowd of several thousand unarmed people must have far exceeded the casualties on the government side.

One hundred and seventy-two men, many of whom were hungry peasants and who were so hungry because they had been forced to contribute heavily to the fund for helping the 'war for democracy', stand sentenced to be 'hanged by the neck until dead'. This legal murder is being perpetrated in the name of 'law and order' and of 'good government'. The real crime these men committed was to rebel against unbearable economic exploitation, and to demonstrate the desire to fight for their rights. In doing so, they had to challenge the feudal absolutism which flourishes in India under the benign protection of British democracy. These men will be legally murdered for having spontaneously expressed the noble principles that inspired the glorious peasant revolts of Great Britain and the European countries. In order to defend the rights of landlordism, which constitutes its most loyal support, British Imperialism is committing a barbarous deed which will surpass even its own none-too-enviable record in India. Such a prostitution of justice will be unparalleled in its majestic vindictiveness and brutality.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II No. 1, 15 February 1923. SNR

On behalf of the toiling millions of India, and in the name of that 'justice and fair play' in which you believe so implicitly, we call upon the leaders of the British working-class to intervene and demand that these condemned champions of the Indian peasantry be reprieved. We call upon the British Labour Party to bring pressure upon the government by means of parliamentary action, as well as by strikes and demonstrations in case parliamentary action fails to have the desired effect. You must take these steps if you want to prove that you are not a party to the imperialism of the British bourgeoisie. If you fail to act in this tragic moment, you will go down in history with the blood of the Indian peasantry upon your head, and you will stand charged with the betrayal of those principles of 'freedom and democracy' that you claim to advocate. At the same time, we appeal directly to the British proletariat to repudiate your leadership, in case you fail to act and thus condone this legal murder by infuriated Imperialism.

Zurich, 2 February

M. N. Roy
for the Communist Party of India.

Definition of Swaraj*

Every member of the so-called 'politically-minded' classes of our people agrees that India must have National Self-government. But every one has his own conception of this common ideal. The great question is: 'Within or without the Empire?'

This cardinal issue in our national struggle is not to be approached from a sentimental point of view, as is done by many a lower middle-class romanticist; nor is any credence to be given those who whisper that all the Congress leaders want 'complete and absolute' independence, but do not say so openly for reasons of policy. It is neither a question of sentiment nor of conspiracy. It is the essential feature of the programme of national struggle, hence of vital importance to the movement. It is to be approached with a clear understanding of the essence of Imperialism on the one hand, and the class composition of the nationalist movement, on the other.

National Independence is not a question of honour. It is not a *thing in itself*. A people rebel against foreign domination because it imposes upon them various disabilities obstructing their progress. The English came to India to make profit. The sole object of the British government is to see that British capital extracts the maximum amount of profit by exploiting India. In this, its essential character, Imperialism constitutes itself into an obstacle to our national development. Hence the necessity of rebelling against foreign domination. National Independence cannot be realized, the economic and political disabilities imposed upon our people by British domination cannot be removed, until the national government is free from all control of the imperialist overlord.

British domination has stood in the way of our national progress; it has held our society in a backward stage of economics; it has prevented the growth of advanced political thoughts and institutions; and above all, by forcibly making India an agricultural adjunct to industrial Britain, it has sunk our toiling masses into a chronic state of abject poverty. These reasons gave birth to the national movement. The desire to free ourselves from these artificially imposed disabilities inspires us with the ideal of national independence. All talk of 'national honour', India's 'cultural mission' and the like, is reared upon the background of a vital material urge. If the disgrace of being ruled by a foreigner was in itself revolting, every Indian would be actively connected with the national movement. But we know that there are people in India, who not only do not deem it disgraceful, but are thankful for the blessings of British connection, and even of 'British inspiration'. There is no use dismissing these unpleasant phenomena by a wave of the hand, by calling these people renegades. Surely an educated landlord or a member of the Liberal League is much better equipped to feel the stings of disgrace than the man in the village. Nevertheless, it is a well-known fact that these educated gentlemen, who not only know what is good or bad for them, but pretend to know what is good or bad for the 'dumb millions' better than these themselves, are ardent loyalists and votaries of the British connection. Why is it so? This phenomenon can be explained only by looking through the sentimental superstructure of nationalism deep into its material basis. British rule and British connection are conducive to the interests of the class to which these gentlemen belong; hence their loyalism and belief in the 'Commonwealth of Free Nations' which the British Empire is to them.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 2, 1 March 1923, Editorial. SNR

The definition of Swaraj, therefore, has to be given, not from the point of view of sentiment, but of material necessity. It may not be noble to sell one's soul for a mess of pottage; but it is ridiculous to talk of the 'soul' of a nation and be utterly indifferent to its material existence. A soul without a body may be a metaphysical conception; but in the realm of politics, in our national movement, it is an impossibility. If Swaraj does not mean complete independence, it fails to be anything essentially different from the self-government of the Liberals. A clear answer to the question: 'Within or without the Empire?' cannot thus be evaded in the process of defining Swaraj.

Those belonging to and socially represented by the Liberal League have a clear answer to this question. They say that the ideal position for the Indian nation will be in the 'Commonwealth of the British Empire'. This answer has conclusively debarred them from any further claim to the leadership of the nationalist movement, which directly or indirectly suggests that the Indian people must have an independent national existence. The logical consequence of this answer of the Liberals leads to the political philosophy of 'cooperation' with the British government. The Extremist Nationalists pretend to challenge this position of the Liberals. But all they can do by way of distinguishing themselves from the Liberals is not to give an answer to the question: 'Within or without the Empire?' They prefer not to risk a reply in so many words. Every deed of theirs, nevertheless, speaks eloquently of what they stand for.

The Swaraj of Mahatma Gandhi, the Swaraj of the Non-cooperators, has always been an enigma to many a faithful follower. But to a conscious revolutionary, it is as clear as daylight. The existing system of British government does not accommodate the interests of that class of our society which is moulding the policy of the Congress today. The discontent of the Congress is not against Imperialism as such, but against bureaucracy. It follows from this, that as soon as Imperialism will mend its ways by removing the grievances of a particular class, everything will be settled, as far as the present leaders of the national movement are concerned, in just the same way as the Reforms Act did with the Moderates. The social element leading our national struggle today hopes to progress within the limits of Imperialism; therefore, it does not consider that National Independence and Imperial connection necessarily exclude each other. No wonder that authoritative organs of the Congress denounce our programme of 'Separation from all imperial connection' as a 'seditious document', and take Reuter to task for having given publicity to it (*Bombay Chronicle*). Some are terrified at the very idea of Republicanism, which is as odious to them as 'red ruin' (*Servant*); others consider 'Universal Suffrage'a too hasty step, dangerous for India (*Mussulman*). A careful analysis of the violent reaction to our programme will convince every honest revolutionary nationalist of the urgent necessity of an unequivocal programme of national liberation. In other words, *Swaraj*, which vaguely is supposed to be the ideal of every Indian, *must be defined*.

The Congress has given its definition on more than one occasion. Its conception of Swaraj is known to everyone who does not pretend to be ignorant. One has only to read the speech of the Mahatma at Ahmedabad in opposing Hazrat Mohani's resolution, and that of Rajagopal Acharya at Gaya combating the same resolution, to be convinced that the Swaraj of the Non-cooperators does *not* necessarily demand separation from the British Empire. The difference between the self-government of the Liberals and the Swaraj of the Extremists is not qualitative, but quantitative. Both will be satisfied with the same boon; only the former will thankfully accept what is graciously given, whereas the latter will demand full Dominion Status immediately. So soon as Imperialism will find its way to extend the 'measures of self-government' far enough to accommodate the interests of the upper middle class, the bottom will be knocked off the vague 'Non-cooperation' slogan. The national struggle cannot be fought on such an insecure ground. Therefore we insist upon a definition of Swaraj. The character of this definition will show if the Congress is capable of leading the national struggle any further. This definition is not needed for us. We never had any illusion about what the Non-cooperators wanted. But we insist upon this definition for the benefit of the rank and file of the Congress itself—for those sentimental revolutionaries who are blindly following its lead. We want to demonstrate that politics is a class affair, and that the Congress has all along been playing a purely class politics, and is ever ready to sacrifice national interests to class interests, in spite of its pretensions to be a super-class body and its virtuous cant against class interests.

We want to force the middle-class politicians to show their true colour, not to weaken the Congress, but to strengthen it. The Congress cannot be a powerful organ, it cannot play its historic role of leading the revolutionary struggle for national liberation, until it is dragged out of this ambiguous position. The leadership of an anti-Imperialist movement cannot be safely left in the hands of a class *which is willing to compromise at the earliest opportunity*.

If the Congress, as at present constituted, does not declare 'separation from all imperial connection' to be its political programme, it is not because it prefers to avoid legal complications. The attitude of the Congress on this essential point of a programme is not to be explained in such a mechanical way. There are deeper reasons involved in it. The economic grievances and political disabilities, under which the middle classes are smarting, can be mended by readjustment of the methods of imperialist exploitation. Only those, whose position cannot be improved in any way by make-shift arrangements, can be expected to stand firmly for a revolutionary change. And the overwhelming majority of our people, nearly 90 per cent, belong to this category. Neither Self-government realized progressively by constitutional means, nor 'Swaraj' conquered by Non-cooperation will change the economic condition of these 90 per cent of the people. Even full Dominion Status, conceded overnight, would not give political rights to the workers and peasants. A Dominion Parliament controlling the entire policy of the government would not protect the toiling masses from the exploitation of the capitalist and land-owning classes. Such a parliament would defend the interests of the property-owners, and would act at the beck and call of the Money-bag. The nation would still remain in the bonds of slavery.

Therefore, the interests of the majority demand *complete separation from all imperial connection and the establishment of a Republican State based* on the democratic principles of *Universal Suffrage*. This programme cannot be any more put forward by the petty bourgeois parties than by the industrial capital represented by the Liberal League. This can be done only by the party consciously representing the interests of the exploited masses. In the interests of the majority of the people, Swaraj must be defined as *Complete National Existence free from any Imperial connection*.

An Appeal to the Labour Unions of India*

Workingmen and Workingwomen,

The world has been shocked to hear of that prostitution of justice which has condemned to death *one hundred and seventy-two* of the men arrested more than a year ago after the revolt of the exploited peasantry in the District of Gorukhpur was drowned in blood. These men are to be executed with the sanction of the 'law', ostensibly because of their participation in the riot at Chauri Chaura, in which 22 policemen were killed. 172 men, the majority of whom are poor cultivators, driven to revolt by the pressure of unbearable exploitation by the government as well as by the Talukdars, are condemned to death in revenge for the lives of 22 policemen, who fell in upholding 'law and order'. In other words, the crime of these men was that they dared to assert their right to live, and challenged the authority which orders them to toil and starve perpetually. Chauri Chaura was the scene of a revolt, not only against the government, but also against the established order of society, against the sacred right of Property, of Landlordism. Hence the hand of repression has come down there in its naked brutality, first as armed forces firing upon an unarmed mob, then in the wholesale arrest of all implicated, and lastly at this legal massacre. This cannot be denounced too strongly.

While 172 brave soldiers of freedom are standing at the foot of the gallows, the National Congress, which called upon the peasantry to act, remains silent, content with expressing pious horror at this 'barbarous violence', which overshadows the 'atrocious violation of Non-Violence' at Chauri Chaura. Those who have exhausted their vocabulary in condemning the Government law-courts today pathetically hope that an appeal to the higher courts will save the lives of these men. Not a finger is raised, not a step is taken, to rescue these men from the jaws of death. They are left to the mercy of a merciless enemy.

The reason for this inactivity and indifference of the Congress is obvious. We do not desire to expose that reason here. What we want at this moment is to take some vigorous, effective steps to save those comrades of ours from the gallows or life-long transportation, to which at best the sentence can be reduced by the High Court.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 2, 1 March, 1923. SNR

Workers of India, it depends on you to save these men. No idle resolutions, no expression of horror, no criticism of imperialist justice will be of any avail. These men stand at the door of death as a result of their courage in responding enthusiastically to the call of Non-cooperation, and they can be saved only by effective Non-cooperation, which no other section of the people but you—the producers of everything, the life-blood of Society—can declare to enforce the demand for the release of your condemned comrades.

Workingmen and Workingwomen of India! Demand the release of the Chauri Chaura victims *under the threat of a General Strike*. Do not permit the upper-class leaders to sabotage this urgent action in defence of your class, and in protest against the barbarity of Imperialist justice. Such an action on your part will have the sympathy of and will be supported by the revolutionary proletariat of the world.

Workingmen and Workingwomen of India! Declare a General Strike and save these soldiers of freedom.

For the Communist Party of India

12 February 1923

M. N. Roy

Our Programme—Abolition of Landlordism*

In the last issue we dealt with the imperativeness of a clear definition of Swaraj. The first clause of our programme concerns this question. We have proved that real National Independence cannot be realized within the framework of imperialist connection under whatever camouflage it may be maintained. An Indian nationalist government, separated from all imperial connection and free from any other foreign influence, must necessarily be democratic. It must be a democratic national state that will replace imperialist dictatorship. The Swaraj we are striving for will, therefore, be not any novel creation of the peculiar genius of India, but an independent national government based on such progressive principles as will permit free social and economic progress to the various social elements that are suppressed by the present regime.

This being the case, only those social classes, whose normal development is obstructed by imperialist domination, participate in the national struggle in some form or other, in varying grades of activity and with as much irreconcilability as suits their interests. The programme of the national movement, therefore, must be adapted to the objective aims and aspirations of these social classes. On the other hand, the social elements, whose economic position is not menaced by the foreign rule, cannot be expected to be on the side of the national movement. The backbone of our struggle for liberation is only those classes which stand for progress. These classes are pitted against the British rule, because it stands on the way to their full development. This realistic estimation of the social background of our movement helps us to know from the very beginning who are with us and who are against us; it dissipates the illusion about the supposed patriotism of those who have no reason to be patriotic.

If we start from the premise that the object of our national struggle is the establishment of a free democratic government, it becomes evident that the landowning class will never be favourable to this struggle. On the contrary, the landed aristocracy is sure to be hostile to a democratic movement. The reason is simple. Feudal economy is destroyed by the rise of those progressive forces of production whose unrestricted development demands political democracy. In other words, the ultimate success of our national movement threatens the position of the landowning classes. Therefore, it is as logical for the landlords to be hostile to any national democratic movement as it is for the bourgeoisie and the masses to be the standard-bearers of a national revolution. British domination is harmful to the Indian people, because it obstructs their normal development. The possibility of a free economic development of our society menaces the position of the landed aristocracy. So, the continuance of the British rule guarantees the security of the latter, which, consequently cannot be friendly to a national revolutionary movement.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 3, 15 March 1923, Editorial. SNR

A democratic movement cannot begin without threatening the security of feudal absolutism. Our national struggle being essentially a democratic movement, therefore, challenges the existence of the land-owning class. The former cannot count upon the support of the latter. On the contrary, the two mutually exclude each other, since they represent irreconcilably antagonistic social forces. Landlordism can continue its existence only with the support of the British ruler; therefore it is bound to be loyal. In fact, the entire political philosophy of this class, which represents a decayed social order—no less a fetter on our progress than Imperialism—is defined by the one word 'loyalty'. This being the case, no programme of National Revolution can be potential without having for its principal demand the 'Abolition of Landlordism'. It is more so in India; because in our country, besides being by itself a reactionary social force, the landed aristocracy constitutes the main prop of the British rule. Therefore, any movement directed against the British domination is inevitably hostile to the absolutism of the landed aristocracy; on the other hand, any movement, that fails to recognize in landlordism a reactionary force and does not declare war upon it, cannot be counted upon as positively hostile to Imperialism. Such a movement is not even a democratic movement which in a certain stage of social development is a revolutionary force. Therefore by failing to subscribe to our slogan of 'Abolition of Landlordism', the middle-class parties within the Congress have proved their non-democratic character. It follows from this that, owing to stunted economic development, our middle-classes, specially the lower strata, have not yet been divorced from feudal reaction. But the struggle for national liberation cannot be carried on through successive stages unless it is freed from the confused ideology and hesitating direction of a class so connected with the most reactionary social force.

The theory of neutralizing the landed aristocracy is wrong. The national movement, as any other political movement, is but the expression of a social readjustment. The readjustment takes place on the background of class conflict. No national movement, worth the name, became evident in India, so long as the country remained entirely agricultural. The rise of a class not depending on agriculture, nor on landowning, marked the beginning of our national movement. Had there been no British domination, the rise of a new clas owning higher means of production would have led to a democratic movement directed solely against Feudal absolutism. Europe went through this period of democratic evolution in the latter part of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. The Great French Revolution was the classical example. The British conquest obstructed the normal development of the Indian people; consequently, the evolution of democratic ideas and the bourgeois democratic revolution actuated by these ideas were delayed. But the progress of our people, the consolidation of the Indian nation, demand the enactment of a democratic revolution. None can steal a march upon history, although it is quite possible to accelerate the movement by taking advantage of the experience gained by other peoples. Therefore, a movement which will culminate in conquering a really free national existence for the Indian people, must have two characters. It must be simultaneously directed against Imperialist domination, which hindered the normal evolution of our society, and against those native forces of reaction which enjoy a prolonged life, simply because the growth of progressive socio-economic factors was not permitted in the interest of foreign capital. Revolutionary nationalism will succeed by performing two historic functions, namely, the liberation of the Indian masses from the exploitation of imperialist capital and the vindication of the progressive social tendencies as against the absolutism of reaction embodied in landlordism and all the economic backwardness, social prejudice, intellectual stagnation, religious bigotry etc. that go with it.

The second of the two functions of revolutionary nationalism is more fundamental than the first because the first goal can be realized only if the second is triumphant. That is, the nationalist movement must be essentially democratic, inspired with a revolutionary social vision and fighting under the banner of a progressive economic programme, if it is to be victorious. It must take into account the class antagonism pervading the social structure and know how to mobilize its forces and spot its enemies in view of this antagonism. Put on such a basis, our national movement cannot help taking up the slogan of 'abolition of landlordism'. If it does not do so, it only signifies that its social character still needs clarification, and that a more revolutionary outlook has to be infused into it by the militant action of the masses. But it must be said categorically that our nationalist movement cannot be what it pretends to be without undertaking courageously the most important task it is called upon by history to perform.

Then, the tactical necessity of such a slogan is equally great. The fact that the bitter experience of the last two years has failed to impress upon the Congress leadership this necessity speaks for the latter's non-revolutionary, and to a great extent, socially reactionary character. The imaginary patriotism of the landed barons, as well as the hope of getting a few hundred rupees of subscription from them, do not by any means warrant the policy of repudiating a programme which corresponds to the interests of 80 per cent of the population, and which alone can infuse enthusiasm into the peasant masses, without whom no liberation movement can be successful in India. The most outstanding social phenomenon in India today is the growing conflict between the landed aristocracy and the capitalists, on the one hand, and the landlord and cultivator on the other. The former conflict is crystallizing in the duel between the Liberals and Landowners inside the Legislatures. It shows that the big bourgeoisie is delivering an indirect attack upon the citadel of Imperialism. The object is to free the miserable peasantry that they may become wage-slaves in the industrial centres. The second conflict, that between the landlord and the tenant, concerns us more; because nothing goes to strengthen the position of the government more than the clever exploitation of this conflict, which grows every day in spite of the injunctions of the Congress, and the holy sermons to the landlords to be kind to their victims. Taking advantage of this conflict, the government on the one hand, poses as the protector of the peasant masses, and on the other, can always threaten the undermined feudal reactionaries to make them do anything. If a class conflict, which is the dynamic force behind a great revolution, is left to benefit and strengthen Imperialism, that is because of the reactionary nature of our national movement, which is even averse to the first principles of democracy. Class-conflict supplies the impetus to every political movement. The failure to recognize it and the inability to adjust our ideology and tactics according to it, constitute the weakness of our national movement. But the national struggle must go on. It must be saved from the hands of those hopelessly tied to reactionary social elements. This task can only be performed by those feeling the stings of this conflict, and will be unwittingly aided by the Liberals, who represent a class whose development cannot take place without ruining the landed aristocracy.

One Year*

Today the *Vanguard* completes the first year of its existence. In this short period of twelve months its usefulness has been unquestionably demonstrated. It has faithfully and courageously stood at its post through thick and thin. But above all, it has been proved by the relentless logic of history that the *Vanguard* is destined to play a decisive role in the Indian Revolution, because it is the standard-bearer of the class which is objectively the most revolutionary element in our society. In a most critical period of the national life, when the movement for national liberation was led into a blind alley and proved to be utterly incapable of finding the only way out, the *Vanguard* appeared on the scene as the herald of a new phase of the anti-imperialist struggle. From the very beginning, we did not hesitate to point out the weakness of the nationalist movement. Our object in doing so was not mere barren criticism; it was, on the one hand, to awaken the consciousness of the revolutionary social forces, and, on the other, to stimulate the vacillating middle-classes to action. A retrospective analysis of the past year leaves no doubt whatsoever that the path indicated by us was the only path to national liberation. If today the Indian people do not stand any nearer to the goal than a year ago, it is because of the refusal of the bourgeois leaders to travel on the only way which leads to national freedom. We have never had any illusion on this score. Therefore we are not in the least disheartened by the apparent depression in the movement. In fact, we predicted this period of depression as the logical consequence of the reactionary philosophy and faulty tactics of Non-cooperation.

Now that the deadlock, which followed the crisis, is breaking down before the rise of new political parties with clear social character and unmistakable economic significance, conscious revolutionary factors of our society can no longer defer a serious consideration of the programme advocated in the columns of the *Vanguard* during the last twelve months. We came out with the demand for the organization of a mass-party which should lead the workers and peasants in the anti-imperialist struggle, independent of the treacherous bourgeoisie and the timid lower middle-class. Never has this demand of ours been more imperative than today. The national movement is floundering like a rudderless ship on the ocean of political confusion and dangerous inaction. Taking advantage of this depression, the bourgeoisie is coming out with its doctrine of compromise and gradual evolution through constitutional means. It is needless to say that the organization of the revolutionary social forces—of those who have nothing to lose, but a world to gain, of those who therefore must denounce the tactics of compromise—cannot be delayed without great detriment to the freedom of the Indian people.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II No. 7, 15 May 1923, Editorial. SNR

The nationalist movement has turned the corner. It is no longer the same half-utopian, half-reactionary movement called Non-cooperation which was led by Gandhi. Today it is a decidedly bourgeois movement which seeks such modification of the imperialist domination as will permit the development of Indian capitalism. This programme certainly sounds like that of the good old Moderates. But there is a fundamental difference which is very dangerous. The post-war restiveness of the masses and the utilization of this mass upheaval by the Non-cooperators have taught the bourgeoisie a valuable lesson. This lesson constitutes the essential difference between the programme of old Moderatism and that of the new bourgeois nationalism. While the former believed sublimely in the doctrines of constitutional democracy preached by the British Liberals and, therefore, prayed and petitioned year after year, the latter takes the field with the same programme but with the knowledge of a very powerful weapon and with the determination to make use of it. This weapon is the pressure of a mass movement. What they want is not a revolutionary change, but a readjustment of relations between the imperialist overlord and the Indian bourgeoisie. If need be the discontent of the masses will be exploited in order to force upon Imperialism the necessity of this readjustment. Hence so much talk about the 'masses'. Hence the determination of the liberal intellectuals to organize the workers and peasants!

What does this new tendency signify? It signifies that the workers and peasants are to be used in order to conquer concessions for the upper-and middle-classes. In other words, the workers and peasants should bear the brunt of the anti-British struggle, should go to jail, should shed their blood if, perchance, it is necessary;—for what? To forge the chain of their own bondage. Their reward will be the gilt on the chain. This is what bourgeois nationalism, which has been born out of the ruins of Non-cooperation, really means. This is what has been foretold by us during the last twelve months. This is what calls for the organization of a revolutionary party of the masses, totally independent of the bourgeoisie.

There are two reasons why a revolutionary mass-party, based upon the class interests of the workers and pauperized peasantry, should be immediately organized. First, such a party is alone capable of leading the anti-imperialist struggle further; and second, such a party must come into existence in order to prevent the fruits of national freedom conquered by the workers and peasants, from being totally misappropriated by the bourgeoisie.

The inner contradictions of capitalist production today force Imperialism to mend its ways. Curiously enough, the latest phase of bourgeois nationalism in India sets out to 'end or mend' the British domination. 'To end' is but a threat to expedite the process of 'mending'—the necessity of which is already recognized by Imperialism, not under the pressure of the nationalism of the colonial bourgeoisie, but before the threatening collapse of the world capitalist structure. So it is clear that the day may not be very remote when the ways of Imperialism will be 'mended'. Indian capitalism will come into its own. And for what purpose? To what effect? To expropriate the poor peasantry, herd them into the great industrial centres and suck their life-blood with the help of the monster of the Machine. This will be done by the joint efforts of the foreign and native bourgeoisie, the brothers in spirit. This, in broad outlines, is the picture of national freedom which will be bestowed upon the Indian people if the working and peasant masses fail to assert themselves through their conscious vanguard—an organized class party—on the political situation.

A year ago today, the *Vanguard* appeared on the political stage of India with the standard of this political party. We did not come too early, nor were we too late. But our path has not been strewn with flowers. Various have been the obstacles that we have had to overcome. From the very beginning, Imperialism recognized its mortal foe in the *Vanguard* which however, was still looked upon with inertness and even with suspicion by many of those whose interests and sentiments it objectively reflected. We were not cordially welcomed by the upper-class nationalists; the Non-cooperators could not relish our dispassionate criticism of their social philosophy and political impotency. This was not unexpected by us. Through such variegated circumstances, the *Vanguard* has marched boldly on, with a firm conviction, that the day will come when the historic necessity of the mission undertaken by us will be recognized by a considerable section of the revolutionary elements in the movement.

If the life of the *Vanguard* has not been without success in the national sphere, it has been more so in the international sphere. Through its medium and that of the Communist Party for the first time, an organic and active relation has been established between the struggling Indian people and the world proletariat, led by the victorious workers and peasants of Russia. The significance of this international relation may not yet be fully realized by our nationalists, who vainly seek the sympathy and support of the bourgeois world, but it will be the greatest asset for the Indian workers and peasants, who to-day stand on the eve of a bitter and protracted political struggle. The telegram* received by us from the Presidium of the Communist International on the first anniversary of the *Vanguard* proves that the Indian working class, which enters the struggle under the rage of Imperialism and frown of the national bourgeoisie, has the backing and comradeship of the organized Proletarian Army, mightily battering down the social system which enslaves nations and makes machines out of men, to swell the pockets of a few.

The *Vanguard* enters the second year of its existence with something accomplished and with a greater future ahead. It is the banner of the army which is destined to usher into India an era of real freedom which will open the door to progress and prosperity to those who toil.

Telegram*

To the Editor, 'VANGUARD',

The Executive Committee of the Communist International greets the first organ of Indian communist thought on the occasion of its first anniversary. The Communist International and its sections follow the activities of the Vanguard with the closest interest, and observe with pleasure its growing influence among the Indian working-class. There is no doubt that the Vanguard will play a great part in the history of the Communist Movement in India. We wish further success to the herald of the Indian Social Revolution.

Long live Free India!
Long live the Communist Party of India!
Long live the Vanguard!
Presidium of the Communist International

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* Published prominently in a box within the editorial 'One Year' in Vol. II, No. 7, 15 May 1923. SNR

The Trade Union Congress*

The long-postponed third annual session of the All-India Trade Union Congress at last met. Those who expected a new leadership from this quarter have been disappointed. The gathering at Lahore was a working-class affair only in name. The spirit that reigned there was one of pure nationalism and humanitarian idealism. Nationalist leaders representing practically all the classes of our society except the working-class arrogated to themselves the role of 'labour delegates'. Their monopoly was broken only by a few incipient labourites who vehemently opposed any political action on the part of the trade unions. The gathering as a whole, however, acted from the beginning to the end as an adjunct to the National Congress, actuated partly by the anxiety to find ways and means of enlisting the services of the working-class for the cause of bourgeois nationalism, whose triumph will signify the increased exploitation of the masses.

The following quotation from the *Nation*, which breathes the spirit of the All-India Trade Union Congress, is a graphic picture of what the Lahore gathering was and what could be expected of it. On 27 March the *Nation* writes: 'A huge fleet of motor-cars drove up to the gate of the Bradlaugh Hall, and vociferous cheers greeted the arrival of the leaders. The hall was gaily decorated with wreaths of flowers. Several parties of musicians were present who sang national songs until the arrival of the President-elect. As soon as the Deshbandhu's car drove up, shouts of "Bande Mataram" and "Deshbandhu Das ki Jai" went up from all quarters . . . . Many other ladies and gentlemen were present . . .'. And so on went the description of the gathering, which was supposed to be composed of the representatives of Indian workers living on starvation wages, or at least of sincere reformers moved by the misery of the poor! To such an elite of intellect and opulence did the naive Deshbandhu preach his doctrine of 'Swaraj for the 98 per cent!'

The President, whose Utopianism seems to be still struggling against the pragmatic politics of his rationalist associates, could not but feel a bit uneasy in the midst of this mockery, and in his concluding speech observed: 'One criticism that has been levelled against us is that we have a Trade Union Congress in which there are not many workers. Let us hope in a few years the delegates will be the labourers themselves'. A pious hope indeed; but do the present self-appointed labourites permit us to share the hope of Mr Das? If the Lahore gathering was unsoiled by the shadow of a dirty cooly or rayat, it is neither the ignorance nor the inertness of the latter that is to be blamed, as our labour-leaders and intellectual aristocrats are prone to do. Mr Das, who deplored the absence of real workers' delegates in the so-called Trade Union Congress, himself pictured the truly proletarian and revolutionary atmosphere in which the previous annual session was held in the coal fields of Jharia. But what a long way this Trade Union Congress has gone since those days of 1921 when it came dangerously near to being a real working-class organization! It is not the workers who have to be induced to attend the Trade Union Congress, as Mr Das appeared to mean in his above-quoted remark, but on the contrary, it is the Trade Union Congress which runs away from the filth and squalor of the field and factory, the mines and plantations. Seventeen months ago its second annual session was attended by six thousand working men, and it was defended against the combined attack of the employers and the Government by an army of our fifty thousand rebellious workers, who by the force of a mass strike wrested from the reluctant capitalists at least the promise of a 20 per cent wage increase. What a change this interval of seventeen months has wrought in the Trade Union Congress! In the place of ragged men straight from the coal-pits, Lahore gaily welcomed a galaxy of bourgeois nationalists and intellectual dilettantes who rolled luxuriously to the Congress in a 'huge fleet of motor-cars' to make speeches and pass resolutions in the name of the poor down-trodden '98 per cent'. The 'Western method of labour organization' as well as the corrupted Capitalist civilization of the West, which most of the leaders castigated and promised to lead the Indian workers away from, can hardly outdo such a mockery, and such hypocrisy!

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II No. 7, 15 May 1923, second editorial. SNR

So much for the character and composition of this august assembly which calls itself the All-India Trade Union Congress. Now a few remarks about its accomplishment in this particular session. The first and foremost, of course, was the speech of Mr Das, who once more pronounced the same views as expressed at Gaya, leaving out the treatise on constitutional law. His was a programme of pure and honest Nationalism tempered by humanitarian sentiments. He wanted 'the uplift of the masses for culture and for the struggle for national freedom'. It is a desire that can be shared by every honest nationalist; but why deliver this speech in what is supposed to be a working-class organization? But Mr Das, perhaps to break the monotony and make up for the mediocrity of the entire show, came out with something new in his concluding speech. This was his definition of 'true Socialism' and an explanation of his views on private property. A devout believer in Hindu metaphysical philosophy, which lays down that the

Supreme Being is with and without form at the same time, Mr Das believes in private property and does not believe in it. This scholastic statement necessitated further elucidation which was: 'the right of holding private property is useless and unjust unless it leads to a higher national interest'. So, one of the principal planks in the programme of Mr Das' party calls for the preservation of private property and accumulation of individual wealth, because it will lead to higher national interests. This was a very uncomfortable position for one preaching Swaraj for the masses from the presidential chair of a workers' Congress. So Mr Das took refuge in ethical abstractions, by which the actions of the ruling class in every age and every clime can be not only justified, but glorified. He argued that it is the *evil* in private property that we must fight against. 'The selfish man will give up being selfish if he will think less of himself and more of humanity'. But how is Mr Das going to bring about this little change in human nature? A convinced nationalist with a strong tendency towards cultural imperialism, he is, however, not to be daunted. He expects to stagger his audience by 'the magnificent endowments of our temples' etc., etc. Well, certainly Mr Das is not ignorant of the fact that the money spent on humanitarian endowments by a Rockefeller or a Carnegie is not less magnificent. Therefore, we can take it that Mr Das approves of the huge accumulation of wealth in the hands of these persons because they spend a part of it not only on higher national, but on international interests. Then he must also approve of the method by which such accumulation takes place. And here Mr Das proves himself to be a votary of the Western Capitalist civilization which, according to him, has no place in this holy land of ours!

Through such dangerous arguments Mr Das came to the conclusion: 'so when people say that the right of private property should be done away with, do not be misled. It is the evil in private property that should be done away with. This is true Socialism'. According to this new theory, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Ford and their like are not less true socialists than those ancient Hindu monarchs and merchants who endowed magnificent temples for the best interest of the nation. Well, may poor old Marx turn in his grave to hear himself quoted by one expounding such a new theory of Socialism!

The series of resolutions passed in this assemblage of respectable 'ladies and gentlemen' is too long to be dealt with in detail. Nor is there anything deserving particular attention in those conventional resolutions. But we cannot pass by one curious detail. In its editorial on 28 March the *Nation* mentions the adoption of a 'sensational resolution demanding the socialization of the means of production, distribution and exchange'. But it was in vain that we searched for this resolution in the reports of the Congress. We wonder what happened to it! Evidently, at the eleventh hour it had to be shelved in order not to alienate the support of the 'ladies and gentlemen' that honoured the gathering with their presence. One must have something; the workers were already discarded. The displeasure of the propertied patrons could hardly be risked by bringing forward an academic resolution. But why fear? One need not risk his respectability in these days by simply advocating such resolutions. Has not the very British parliment been desecrated by Snowden? It is alright so long as you do not mean business, like the spiritual guides of the British Labour Party.

The days of Indian labour are yet to come.

Class Struggle*

'History is the history of class-struggles'—thus wrote Karl Marx more than half a century ago. This new reading of human history was presented to the world at a time when Capitalism was still comparatively in its earlier stages. Class differentiation was not yet so sharp as it has since grown, in consequence of the intensification of capitalist exploitation. Nor were the Social Sciences, which today throw a flood of new light upon the past, developed to any great extent. Consequently, at the time of its first formulation, the Marxian theory of history certainly did not go unchallenged. It has been subjected first to the criticism of bourgeois learning retained by the Capitalist State; later, the alarming growth of Revolutionary Socialism divested this criticism of its former academic character. The wild ravings of the bourgeois intellectuals against the theory of class-struggle simply showed the sharpening of class antagonism.

So it is not only in India that the theory of class struggle and class interests is declared taboo by the bourgeoisie. Our spiritual Nationalists and the humanitarian labour leaders need not, therefore, congratulate themselves upon having discovered that the sacred soil of India is immune from class antagonism, which is the curse of western civilization. Marx and his Materialist Conception of History may be the result of western civilization, but was not Thomas Carlyle, who said that the history of the world was the biography of great men, also a product of western society? Today, when class antagonism has broken out into a bloody civil war, the bourgeoisie stoutly decries the theory of class interest, as against democratic relations between capital and labour. They do it while every act of theirs is a move in the fiercest class war which they are brutally conducting in every walk of society.

It is but natural that those who are benefited by the social system maintained by class domination will deny the existence of this domination. It is so in the West, and it is not otherwise in India. All the voluminous works on capitalist economics together with the learned treatises on bourgeois philosophy, however, did not make class domination non-existent, although they denied it. So soon as the exploited masses grow conscious of their interests, class antagonism becomes evident to them, and the hypocrisy of the doctrine of equality, be it democratic or spiritual, is exposed. Therefore, the propertied classes and the intellectuals paid by the propertied classes always endeavour to prevent the development of class consciousness among the labouring masses; because such consciousness marks the beginning of the end of unresisted exploitation. The pious horror of class antagonism, which is expressed by even those of our leaders who shed tears for the 'masses' and spin Utopian schemes for their salvation, has grown out of the instinctive desire for the safety of class domination.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 9, 15 June 1923, Editorial. SNR

Class war is the inevitable attribute of civilization, which does not differ fundamentally in different countries. Civilization is a stage of human development. Human society is called civilized when the human being has succeeded in conquering to a considerable extent the forces of nature. A civilized man is no longer a helpless victim of the elements. He has progressed a long way in his struggle against nature. The primitive tools have been evolved into more advanced means of production, whose ownership has not only ceased to be communal, but has passed on to the hands of the few who possess Capital. The development of the means of production leads to their concentration, and this, in its turn, helps the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the possessing class which is growing smaller and smaller every day. This accumulation of wealth is effected only by expropriating the ever-growing majority—the workers—who are sunk into the depths of poverty. The corollary to this situation is class war.

In civilized society, class antagonism becomes sharpest and breaks out into open civil war; but it exists, although in less acute forms, in the previous stages of society. Ever since primitive man came out of tribal communism and entered the stage of society in which the first forms of private ownership were to be noticed, he has been involved in an incessant class war. The root cause of all the great movements of human history is to be found in the revolt of the oppressed class against the oppressing class. The history of India, like the history of any other country, is full of such revolts. The more human society progresses, the more advanced the means of production becomes, the more conscious grows the interests of the classes, and the class conflict becomes fiercer in consequence. If in India such a form of class war, as is prevalent in the West, is still lacking to a certain extent, the reason is to be sought not in its spiritual nature, but in the backwardness of Indian society. Owing to the retarded growth of modern means of production, the class differentiation has not yet become as clear as it is in the highly industrialized countries. The difference between the intensity of class conflict lies not in the geographical situation of the particular country, nor in the peculiar genius of a given people, but in the grades of economic development. In the industrialized parts of India, the conflict between Capital and Labour is not much milder than in the West, although the Indian workers still lack sufficient class-consciousness.

Of course, there are many who hold that not only has India travelled on a special road, but she will make further progress also in her own way. These people have still to learn that they themselves give the lie to their own theory. The very nationalist movement is but a form of class-struggle. The class-struggle between feudalism and the new bourgeoisie, which broke out into a wave of revolutions in Europe, the mightiest crest of which wave was the Great French Revolution, could not take place in India owing to the advent of the British. The nationalist movement is but the belated enactment of the historic struggle of the bourgeoisie to liberate the forces of social production from the yoke of Feudalism. The introduction of a third element, namely British domination, has complicated and confused the issue, whose fundamental significance, however, remains the same. The fact that the landed aristocracy is today found allied with the British proves that Nationalism, in addition to its anti-British character, constitutes an objective menace to the remnants of Feudalism. The victory of Nationalism will mean the victory of the native bourgeoisie, and the victory of the bourgeoisie will mean the triumph of Capitalism. In other words, through the turmoils of the nationalist movement, India is advancing towards higher grades of civilization which, by the very nature of things, will intensify the class antagonism between the two sections into which the society is being divided.

Thus there is no escape. Indian society is pursuing the same line of evolution as any other human community. This fundamental truth is not affected by superficial peculiarities, which are being held out as essential features by the conscious or unconscious propagandists of the dominating class, whose privileged position will be impaired by the growth of class consciousness among the exploited masses.

The Enlarged Executive of the Communist International*

Opening session

The Congress of the Enlarged Executive opened on Tuesday, 12 June, at 7 p.m. in the Andrejewski Hall, in which the Fourth World Congress and the recent Congress of the Russian Communist Party were held. . .

Comrade Zinoviev was unanimously elected Chairman of the meeting of the Enlarged Executive amidst applause. The following comrades were elected to the Presidium: Trotsky—Russia; Bottcher—Germany; Tibot—France; Smeral—Czechoslovakia; Gennari—Italy; Gallacher—England; Trammael and Hoglund—Scandinavia; Amter—America; Kolarov—the Balkans; Roy—India; and Katayama, the East. . .

Comrade Zinoviev informed the Congress that the Executive had decided to appoint Comrade Lenin Honorary President of the Communist International. This announcement was greeted with stormy applause. . .

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 10, 1 July 1923. From the section 'Home and Abroad'. Only three paragraphs are reproduced here from the report published in *The Vanguard*. SNR.

Some Facts about the People's Life*

Average monthly income of a working class family (of four) in Bombay	Rs. 52
47 per cent of the working families are in debt to moneylenders	
Average indebtedness	Rs. 130
Average rate of interest	75 p.c.
(The rate is frequently exceeded.)	
Net amount annually paid by a working family to the usurer	Rs.97.5
Approximate total indebtedness of the Indian cultivating population Rs. 9,000,000,000	
Averge interest exacted by the rural usurer	over 100 p.c.
Average per capita indebtedness	Rs. 28
Amount exacted from each cultivator by the usurer per year therefore is	Rs. 25

Will Swaraj be worth fighting for if it will not save the people from this economic slavery? Sincere patriots! Think over the matter and decide for whose interest you will shed your blood. For the exploited majority or the exploiting minority, which wants to turn the national freedom into the freedom for its class to exploit the producing masses?

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. II No. 12, 1 August 1923, prominently boxed on the front page.
SNR

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Bourgeois Nationalism*

We are told by a friend that our critique of bourgeois nationalism is resented by many a sincere revolutionary nationalist because the latter think that this criticism reflects upon their honesty. Let it be said at the very beginning that our revolutionary duty does not permit us to spare the feelings of any particular body which directly or indirectly acts contrary to the interests of the Indian masses. We believe that the revolutionary nationalists, who are inspired by the noble ideal of national liberation, and who during the last two decades have amply proved their readiness to suffer for this ideal, are also with us in the desire to protect the interests of and secure happiness and prosperity for the masses. Correctly understood, our criticism, therefore, should not offend these honest idealists; on the contrary, the object of this criticism has always been to point out, above all to *them*, the motive behind the apparently plausible acts of the upper classes.

It seems that the misunderstanding arises from the term *bourgeoisie*. The correct socio-economic definition of this term is evidently not asked for. It is looked upon as a purely western commodity which has no place in India. In short, this term awakens in the average Indian a good deal of prejudice, which is kept alive by the subtle propaganda of the upper classes. Instead of looking for the class in our society which corresponds to what is called the bourgeoisie in the West, the common term *'bhadralok'* is taken for the synonym. Hence arises the misunderstanding. Of course, the term *'bhadralok'* also is essentially applicable to the upper classes; and in that sense it does correspond to the 'bourgeoisie' of the West. But the term *'bhadralok'* now embraces such a variety of social elements that it is incorrect to use it as the synonym for the word 'bourgeoisie', which has a very definite significance.

The term *'bhadralok'* literally means a cultured person,—something like the English *'gentleman'*. Certainly it has an indirect economic basis, inasmuch as culture has been so far available only to people enjoying certain economic privileges. The Indian term, however, is not so clearly economic as is 'bourgeoisie'. The latter is a French word which was originally applied to the propertied townsmen, and carried with it all the power and privileges that were the monopoly of the propertied townsmen in the eighteenth century. Therefore, although essentially there is not much difference between the significance of the two terms, commonly not exactly the same thing is understood by them in the places they are respectively used.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. III, No. 1, 15 August 1923, Editorial. SNR

The objection to the term 'bourgeoisie' and particularly the criticism levelled against the philosophy and politics of this class, is based upon this difference between the superficial meaning of the two terms. It is perhaps thought that the Indian upper classes do not care for material things; their superiority is cultural, they are intellectual aristocrats. This is precisely the doctrine whose hypocrisy we mean to expose. It is useless to quarrel over terms. It matters very little whether the term *'bhadralok'* exactly means the *'bourgeoisie'* or not. What does matter is that there is a class in India which for all intents and purposes does occupy the same place in Indian society as the bourgeoisie does in the western countries. All the elements included in the general term 'bhadralok' may not and in fact do not belong completely to this class. It is also true that the relation between this particular section of the *'bhadralok'* and the masses is not the same as the relation between the masses and others who are also called *'bhadralok'*. Still more the relation between this particular section of the *'bhadralok'* (the section which precisely corresponds to the bourgeoisie) and the other sections which are also called *'bhadralok'* is hardly to be distinguished from the relation subsisting between the former and masses. So what is to be noticed is not the loose use of a particular term, a use which has to be made for clarity and in the absence of any more suitable term—but the *social composition* of the class referred to by this term. If this is done, our friends, the nationalist revolutionaries will not have any reason to be offended by our criticism of bourgeois philosophy and politics. They are offended because they think that our criticism is against them; and since they do not possess the attributes which are the object of our criticism, it is quite logical that they should resent our attitude. In fact, what we persistently point out is how the class, from which the revolutionary nationalists hail, do *not* enjoy any of the rights and privileges that are supposed to belong to a *'bhadralok'*, and how the intellectual assets they are so proud of, are nothing but a commodity which is to be sold at the doors of the property-owning upper classes in return for an insufficient means of livelihood. Therefore, our criticism ought to help the revolutionary nationalists see things as they are, instead of wounding their pride.

The reason for this resentment on the part of the revolutionaries, if really resentment is there, is that they consider themselves members of the class which we call the bourgeoisie. Now, in the light of the noble sentiments which move these nationalists, it is not possible to count them among those whose patriotism is manifestly that of property, and whose theory of nationalism, as we will show presently, does not correspond with the welfare of the majority of the people who constitute the nation. We say, at the risk of incurring their displeasure in the beginning, to those who must eventually be with us: 'Do not be so proud of your "*bhadralok*" descent, look at your real position closely with a realist's eye and you will see that you do not belong to the bourgeoisie, the present-day "*bhadralok*" that counts'. In scientific social language, we say to the revolutionary patriots who want the freedom, not of a certain section, but of the masses of the Indian people: 'You are de-classed: economically you have no place in the ranks of the bourgeoisie—you belong to the exploited working class; it is only the prejudice of birth, of tradition that does not allow you to have this realistic view of your position; materially you are an exploited worker pure and simple; spiritually you are bound hand and foot by the subtle propaganda of the upper classes, who are very much interested in keeping alive your prejudice against the 'illiterate mob', so that the union of intellectual worker and manual worker will be delayed as much as possible. Such being the case, why should the class, which does not enjoy any of the rights and privileges that go with property, be active or passive supporters of the politics of bourgeois nationalism?' The revolutionary patriots have nothing but their prejudice to lose. If they can do it, they will appreciate our critique of the bourgeoisie, and will see that this critique does not in the least reflect upon their honesty.

Do we not remember the sentiments that, two decades ago, brought nationalism out of the narrow circle of those engaged in prosperous liberal professions or occupying comfortable government posts? What was the ideal of those pioneers of new nationalism who challenged the right of the then Congress to speak in the name of the nation? The sentiment was of rebellion against the miserable condition to which the masses had been reduced by the foreign ruler. The ideal was to feed the hungry, to enlighten the illiterate. Not the English High Priests of Constitutionalism, but some native rebel or other, for example Bankim Chatterji, was the inspiring genius. The sight of a hungry, ignorant, oppressed people was the moving force. Therefore, the story of the *Ananda Math* fired the imagination of our revolutionary patriots. The cry was, rob the rich to feed the poor. In another part of the country, the vision of Sivaji leading his mountaineers fired the popular imagination. This is the basis of revolutionary nationalism, which concerns itself with the fate of the broad masses of the people. So far none of the political parties, that have at one time or other appropriated the title of fighting for the national interest, have stood upon this basis. The reason for this deviation has been insistently pointed out by us. It has not been an involuntary deviation. Exigencies of class interest demanded it. And here comes the difference between bourgeois nationalism calculated to further the interests of the upper (and specially capitalist) classes, and revolutionary patriotism based upon the noble ideal of securing happiness and prosperity for the majority of the people.

When the bourgeoisie, actuated by the desire to advance its own class interest, betrays the cause of honest patriotism, it certainly becomes imperative that every sincere patriot gets over the prejudice of being a *bhadralok* and takes his stand on the road of a clear revolutionary fight, which will lead to the realization of the ideal that burns in him. Failing to do so, he naturally identifies himself with the bourgeoisie, and therefore deserves to be called a hypocrite.

Now let us see what way the various schools of bourgeois nationalism are following, in order to judge if that way conforms to the ideal of sincere patriotism. In a recent article called the 'Bolshevik Menace', the *Bengalee* holds up our programme as positively harmful to the interests of the nation. After quoting the particular clause which calls for giving the land to the tiller, this organ of the merchant princes and landed barons writes:

'It therefore, behooves all owners of property and wealth, all professional men, all sane and sober patriots, all apostles of education and culture to combine and guard against this incipient danger which threatens to sap the very foundation of the social structure, and paralyse the activities of a young and rising nation'.

The entire article is full of such choice sentiments which can be found expressed abundantly in the press of the big bourgeoisie. Any programme that proposes to curtail in the least the vested interest of the upper classes is condemned in the name of the nation, and the patriotism of the nationalist lower middle classes is invoked to rush to the defence of the rights of property against the exploited and expropriated masses. Does not the idea of honest patriotism warrant an unconditional denunciation of this brand of nationalism? Are we wrong in calling upon the revolutionary nationalists to sever all connection with these patriots of property, and to forget their illusion of intellectual superiority, an illusion which only renders them the involuntary defenders of this brand of nationalism?

One more instance. The Swaraj Party is headed by men whose patriotism is supposed to be above suspicion. Here again, it is not individual idealism but class interest that rules supreme; and the situation has to be met as a class. The Swaraj Party proposes to enter the Councils and put forth a demand for 'real self-government' *on behalf of the nation*. In order to do it, they must have the mandate of the electorate, which is hardly one half per cent of the population. And who constitutes this electorate? Overwhelmingly, the propertied upper classes. Therefore, it is quite conceivable what will be the nature of the 'real self-government' demanded by the Swaraj Party. Here is what the *Tribune* (an organ of the Swaraj Party) says: 'by compelling the government to become really constitutional, in other words, to accept the people, *that is the electorate*, as its only true master'. This is the political philosophy of the party in a nut-shell. The interests of the electorate, that is the infinitesimal minority, are taken for national interests, and so soon as the government takes these interests into consideration it will become really constitutional. Upon this achievement of national self-government, the representatives of this minority will rule over the country in the name of national welfare and democracy!

Is it not a monstrous lie to say that any one of the above parties or some other of similar nature can receive the loyal adhesion of those who honestly desire the welfare of the masses? Is it not a deplorable mistake for the revolutionary patriots to consider themselves allied in any way with the classes that deceive the nation for their own interests? This is what we mean by the nationalism of the bourgeoisie.

Good Criticism but Bad Programme*

The *Socialist* criticizes the manifesto of the projected Workers' and Peasants' Party of India.[1] The manifesto certainly contains many points which call for criticism of much severer nature than that ventured by the *Socialist*. It is a very confused document, full of undigested ideas of the labour movement, sloppy sentimentality and clauses which are positively pernicious. The authors obviously lack the understanding of the task they have set themselves to do. Among the innumerable contradictions and incongruities contained in that manifesto, the *Socialist* picks up only two points to criticize. They are concerning the aim of the proposed party, and private property. 'Achievement of Labour Swaraj' is certainly a vague programme so long as 'Labour Swaraj' is left undefined. We have had so many brands and interpretations of Swaraj during the last three years that one more variety does not make much difference, nor does it dissipate the confusion into which the people have been thrown. The *Socialist* points out this ambiguity, and suggests that the object of the projected party should be not a '*class-Swaraj*' but a 'classless Swaraj'. So far so good; but the criticism should be more penetrating if the ideological confusion of the authors of the manifesto is to be cleared, in order that the party may be born under proper auspices. The term 'Labour Swaraj' does not necessarily mean the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the *Socialist* appears to assume. It is hard to say what is in the mind of those who wrote the manifesto; but a perusal of the document certainly does not permit such a conclusion. The pretence of a programme formulated in the manifesto certainly does not tend towards any dictatorship. On the other hand, 'Labour Swaraj' may mean the 'classless Swaraj' which the *Socialist* suggests because, when the class living on unearned income is eliminated, the society will be so composed that every member will have to contribute a certain amount of labour for its upkeep. But the 'Labour Swaraj' of the manifesto means neither one nor the other. It is just an empty phrase, coined by people perhaps with good intentions, but certainly without any understanding of the term. Had it not been so, the manifesto would deal with more immediate political questions, without solving which, 'Labour Swaraj', neither of one sort nor of the other, can be attained. However, the *Socialist* certainly justifies its name by frowning upon such childish phrases, although it fails to go as far as it should have gone.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. III, No. 2, 1 September 1923, signed article. SNR

[1] The *Socialist* was an English weekly paper started in August 1922 by S. A. Dange, at that time a protege of R. B. Lotvala, a Bombay businessman hostile to Gandhi (Indulal Yagnik, *Life of R. B. Lotvala*, 1952). Dange had drawn attention to himself by publishing his book *Gandhi vs Lenin* towards the middle of 1921. By the end of 1922 there were five small groups of Communists in India regularly receiving literature and instructions from Roy. In the issue of the *Advance-Guard* of 1 October, 1922 Roy had proposed the organization of 'a mass party consciously representing the interests, immediate as well as ultimate, of the workers and peasants', (*Selected Works*, vol. I) and in letters to Dange in November and December he had explained the need of a legal 'People's Party' along with the separate and underground organization of the Communist Party, the latter controlling the former. In March 1923, Dr Manilal Shah published a Manifesto in the *Navayuga* of Guntur (18 and 25 March) proposing 'a Labour and Peasant Party of India'. The Manifesto was reformulated by Singaravelu Chettiar, Roy's contact in Madras, and issued on 1 May under the title 'The Manifesto to the Labour and Kisan of Hindusthan for the formation of a Political Party of their own'. On 5 June Roy sent a Memorandum to his Indian contacts explaining the nature and organization of the proposed legal and open 'working-class party'. But three of his contacts—Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani and Ghulam Hussain—had been already arrested in May. Dange who would not be arrested till March 1924 wrote a criticism of the Singaravelu Manifesto in The *Socialist* on which Roy commented in *The Vanguard* of 1 September 1923, p. 3. SNR.

Then, the question of private property is not the only question which has not been touched in the manifesto. The *Socialist* could point out omissions of much more vital significance. Coupled with 'Labour Swaraj',' the question of private property, of course, stands out as the most glaring of such omissions because it is simply ridiculous to talk of 'Labour Swaraj', be it dictatorship of the proletariat or be it a communist society, without committing oneself to the total abolition of private property. Lack of clarity on such a vital question will not only 'create dissensions in its ranks', as the *Socialist* warns, but will make the very existence of a working class party impossible. In its earlier stages, the working class party may find it necessary to put forward a minimum programme, which leaves out questions of fundamental social readjustment. It goes without saying that the workers and peasants of India, under the present circumstances, must be organized with slogans corresponding to their most immediate necessities. Therefore, such questions as the abolition of private property, communal reconstruction of social economy etc. need not be included in the minimum programme. Why, then, talk of such far-off things as 'labour Swaraj'? It does not come within the purview of immediate necessities. It is certainly out of the realm of practical politics. But the outstanding feature of the manifesto is the lack of all sense of proportion. We have already fully expressed our views on the manifesto and the so-called programme of the projected Workers' and Peasants' Party (*The* Vanguard, 1 August).[2] Here a reference to the criticism of the *Socialist* is only intended.

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[2] *The Vanguard*, vol. II, no. 12, pp. 3–4, 'On Organization and Programme', subsequently included in the book *Political Letters*. SNR

The commendable criticism of the *Socialist*, however, is followed by a bad programme. The prospects of a working class party in India would not be brighter if the programme set forth in the manifesto is rejected in favour of the suggestions made by the *Socialist*. If the one is ambiguous and childish, the other is incoherent and mechanical.

There is no system in the programme suggested by the *Socialist*. In it the far-off ideal is mixed up with what is supposed to be the 'tactics' or the methods of immediate fight. Much more attention is given to the building up of the 'classless Swaraj' (which, according to the *Socialist*, should be the aim of the party) than to immediate political problems and economic necessities. The economics of the *Socialist* is rather shaky. For example, it goes merrily on to the pleasant task of setting up nice little village units, which are to be inhabited by free cultivators, without bothering itself with the thorny question of landlordism, which reigns supreme in India. The Labour-Peasants Party Manifesto advocates a 'Labour Swaraj' (whatever that might be), without defining its attitude about private property; the programme advanced by the *Socialist* proposes a re-grouping of the village, without saying a word as to what should happen to those who own the land today. It is difficult to choose one from the other.

The Programme proposed by the *Socialist* calls for a 'classless Swaraj' which, according to the definition given, is something like a socialist commonwealth. It is certainly a far-fetched programme just at this moment. There are much nearer goals to attain. It is no use being utopians or absolutists. A more immediate and more workable political programme is necessary. It is a long jump from mediaeval feudal-patriarchy to a socialist commonwealth. There is danger of breaking one's neck or being laughed at. Socialism, at least a correct understanding of it, does not overlook the various stages of political existence through which a given community must pass before socialized production, distribution and exchange are reached. The Indian masses will still have to go through not a few of these economic and political stages. A normal march along this line of social evolution has been obstructed by Imperialism; therefore, the first and foremost task is the overthrow of the latter. National liberation is no less necessary for the ultimate freedom of the working class than for the immediate aggrandizement of the native bourgeoisie. It is idle to talk about the socialization of the means of production while this still remains in an almost primitive stage. Neither a handloom nor a piece of land held by the greed of a small peasant can be socialized by dint of a programme. In India we still live in the age of the handloom and of primitive agriculture. Is it not premature to talk of the socialization of the means of production? The production itself is yet far from being socialized. Therefore, we need not fix our gaze so high up in the air.

A political institution, which is necessary for carrying our people through the intervening stages of economic development, should be our immediate goal. To lead the working class for the conquest of that goal is our task.

The *Socialist* naturally (because it is socialist) won't have private property. It proposes nationalization of public utilities, key-industries and 'housing land'. But then comes the fatal slip and the whole programme becomes mere words. 'The owners of socialized property will be maintained by the State by way of compensation'. How is the State going to get the money for this purpose? By selling the 'confiscated' (?) properties or by taxation? The first will mean simply a change of hand and the second embarrassment of riches for the worker. The entire value of the socialized properry cannot be covered by taxation at once. It has to be spread over a certain period, and for this period the State will be the debtor to the expropriated (?) class. The conclusion of this situation is not difficult to make: a circle will be described—the state-power will revert ere long to those who hold the purse-string. The vision of classless Swaraj will vanish in the thin air. Too academic and too puritanical understanding of socialism leads us to such a vicious circle. Socialism tempered by realism, or in other words, ability to apply Marxian dialectics to the Indian situation is what is needed. The programme suggested by the *Socialist* lacks this ability no less conspicuously than the confused manifesto.

The economic structure of the village units, which, according to the *Socialist*, should be the cornerstone of the new society, is too mechanical to be applied on a large scale. Besides, the meaning of that particular clause is far from clear. As soon as something concrete is approached, a serious contradiction is revealed. For instance, in the 'classless Swaraj', the 'hiring of labour will be permitted'. What does it mean? The wage-system is not to be abolished. And the inevitable outcome of a situation where wages are paid and taken, is the development of classes with conflicting interests. Furthermore, 'any ryot unable to run his quota may hire himself out, lease his holding or share it with another'. Such an arrangement will inevitably lead to the accumulation of land in the hands of a few, and it will not be very long before we come back to the same point from where we started the journey towards the 'classless Swaraj', which can never be reached through such a mechanical and perfunctory programme. So, on the question of landownership, which is the most vital economic problem in contemporary India, the programme misses fire altogether.

Although in a previous clause private property is allowed except in the public utilities and some vital industries, in another place it is stipulated that 'private trading will be absolutely forbidden in foodstuffs etc'. This is another of the contradictions that result not from simple oversight, but from the slipshod manner in which is drafted a programme for the building of such a far-off ideal as a 'classless Swaraj'. Better results could be expected if the *Socialist* would apply itself to problems which affect the Indian working class more immediately.

Such topics as tactics, direct action, propaganda, strike, boycott and general strike are dealt with. Not only the definitions of these terms given are not always correct, but nothing at all is said as to what should be the tactics of an Indian working class party at this period of political subjugation, economic backwardness and social stagnation.

In short, the programme is very defective theoretically. If it is meant to be the maximum programme of a Socialist Party, it falls very short of the mark. Nor is it the minimum programme for the building of a working class party. No attempt has been made to formulate the demands which will correspond to the every-day necessities of the worker and peasant. The vague ideals and perfunctory economic proposals contained in it do not make the programme any more understandable for the masses than the programme of the bourgeois parties. The profound theoretical difference between spiritual Swaraj and classless Swaraj is certainly beyond the intellectual ken of the average Indian peasant or worker. It is not enough to say what will happen when the general strike takes place: what is more important is to formulate a programme of action which will develop the movement in such a way that the possibilities of a general strike will be nearer every day. But the *Socialist* has nothing to suggest in this respect. Its programme confines itself, on the one hand, to a mechanical scheme of a new social order and, on the other, to some incorrect definitions.

M. N. Roy

Three Programmes*

The National Congress meets in special session to adopt a programme under which a united national movement can be organized. Nobody has proposed a new programme. The controversy is, which of the programmes put forward by the various political parties can answer the purpose of uniting the movement. We take it for granted that the revolutionary nationalists do not count upon the cooperating Moderates in this attempt to achieve unity. So, the choice has to be made from the three remaining programmes, namely, of the No-Change Party, of the Swaraj Party and the Programme prepared by us for the consideration of the Gaya Congress. We reproduce below the principal points of the three programmes, so that each may judge for himself which of them is capable of uniting all those sections of our nation which are objectively hostile to British Imperialism.

No-Change Programme

1. Boycott of Councils, Law-Courts, and Schools.
2. Use of Khaddar and propagation of the Charka.
3. Removal of Untouchability and Drink-Habit.
4. Establishment of Village Schools and Arbitration Courts.
5. Individual Civil Disobedience.

The aim of the No-Change Party is an undefined Swaraj 'within the British Empire'.

Swaraj Party Programme

1. Dominion Status within the Empire.
2. Council-entry to 'end or mend them'.
3. National Education.
4. Foreign Propaganda.
5. Organization of Village Panchayats.
6. Protection of private property and the right of individuals to accumulate wealth.
7. Organization of Labour.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. III No. 3, 15 September 1923. The three programmes were printed side by side in three columns in the top half of the front page; and the lower part carried the explanatory editorial 'Our Programme Bolshevist or Nationalist' which went into page 2 of the issue. SNR

Our Programme

Political

1. Complete National Independence.
2. Election of a National Assembly by universal suffrage.
3. Establishment of the Federated Republic of India.

Social and Economic

1. Abolition of Landlordism, and distribution of land among the peasantry.
2. Reduction of land-rent to a fixed minimum. Establishment of State Agricultural Cooperative Banks, to provide cheap credit to the cultivator, to free him from the clutches of the money-lender.
3. Modernization of agriculture with State aid.
4. Abolition of indirect taxation, and imposition of an income tax.
5. Nationalization of railways, mines, waterways, telegraphs etc.
6. Development of modern industries with State aid.
7. Minimum wage for labour; an eight-hour day; better working and living conditions.
8. Protective labour legislation, with recognition of unions and right of strike.
9. Workers' Councils in industries.
10. Profit-sharing in all big industries.
11. Free and compulsory education.
12. Separation of the State and Religion.
13. Full social, economic and political rights for women.

Action Programme

1. Organization of the poor peasantry to demand abolition of feudal rights and dues, reduction of land-rent etc.
2. Mass demonstrations with the slogan of "Non-payment of rent and taxes."
3. Resistance against high prices, Salt Tax and other indirect taxation.
4. Full recognition of labour unions and the right to strike.
5. Demand for the eight-hour day, minimum wage, better housing for the workers and a higher standard of living.
6. Support of all strikes, politically and financially, by the Congress.

7. Organization of tenants' strikes against high house rents in the cities.
8. Organization of National Volunteers.
9. Organization of clerks and employees in the government and commercial offices for higher salaries.
10. To enter the Councils with the object of wrecking them.
11. Mass demonstrations for the release of political prisoners.
12. Country-wide Mass Civil Disobedience (General Strike).

Our Programme Bolshevist or Nationalist*

We reproduce in this number of *The Vanguard* the programme which we laid last year before the Indian National Congress at Gaya. Although it was widely published in the Indian press, thanks to the gratuitous services of Reuter, and was freely commented upon by all shades of Indian and Anglo-Indian opinion, it was not brought before the consideration of the Congress, nor was any action taken upon it, for or against. We still abide by this programme, which we have drawn up with the fullest consciousness of the political needs of the moment, needs which our programme takes into consideration, as well as preparing a path to the wider needs of the Indian people ten to fifteen years hence. Our programme has been dubbed 'Bolshevik', 'Communist' and every other adjective deemed reprehensible by our capitalist rulers and their allies, the Moderates. Even our doughty Non-cooperators have condemned it through their various and several organs of the press as 'wild', 'foolish' or 'impracticable'. We are content that they shall rave on, and fully ventilate their opinions, which are but the expression of their various class-interests. We are all the more content, because such expression of opinion has helped exceedingly to clear the muddled political atmosphere, and to dissipate the rainbow of 'Spiritual Swaraj', which befuddled the brains of some of our best nationalist leaders. Since the publication of our programme last December, the clarification of the political ideology of the various classes and sections of the Indian people is noteworthy. Whereas, last year, there was no political programme worthy of the name, advanced on behalf of any single political group, with the possible exception of the Moderates, today we find that every constellation of opinion, from the Home Rulers to the Socialists and Communists, is possessed of a declaration of principles and aims which constitutes a fairly clear and definite programme.

The existence of numerous political parties, each with its own political programme, demarcating the social class and class-interests of each body of opinion—this division of the Indian body politic into a number of well-defined and class-conscious political groups, with a definite goal and the means whereby they propose to attain it,—all this constitutes the greatest step forward in the political history of the past year. Before, our Nationalists of the extremist school were groping in the dark, and some of them were undeniably 'up in the air'. The effect of the developments of the past year, since the debacle of Non-cooperation and the arrest of the Mahatma, has been to bring them down to earth, into the light of cold facts and realities, and to force them to grapple with material problems in a commonsense and matter-of-fact way. We believe that our programme and propaganda, coupled with the objective events of this period, has vitally assisted in this process of clarification. Therefore, we continue our labour with renewed courage and determination, in spite of the innumerable obstacles thrown in our way, not alone by those whom we recognize as our bitterest enemies, but by those who profess to be our friends. We know that truth cannot be stamped out by persecution; much less can it be by cunning intrigue. We therefore, continue serenely in our course, confident in the ultimate success of our work, and encouraged at every step by the multiplying evidence of its fruitfulness. The seed of the ideas we seek to expound is being sown on fertile soil. The Indian workers and peasants are ripe for the message we bear them. Even though the word is carried faintly across thousands of miles of ocean, it reaches their listening ear, helped by the willing efforts of thousands who labour on the spot. For every enemy that seeks to choke and throttle the message of emancipation that we propagate, hundreds spring up to help and encourage. Therefore, we do not despair; therefore we continue our work, filled with the confidence that objective forces, which we merely seek to guide and interpret, will eventually triumph over every individual or set of individuals who try to pit themselves against the workings of these inexorable material laws. The complete fulfillment of all we have spoken and written during the last two years about the Indian nationalist movement, the collapse of Gandhism and the rise of new political parties, proves that we are right.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. III No. 3, 15 September 1923. See footnote to previous item. SNR

We propose in the immediate future to deal exhaustively with our programme, analysing each clause in a series of short articles which will explain and seek to convince the reader of its utility and practicability, and to dissipate the bogey of 'Bolshevism', which has been raised, partly through ignorance of what Bolshevism is, and partly through design to scare away those apt to be interested, by an appeal to their prejudices and fears. Our programme is not 'Bolshevik', or to use the more scientific term, 'Communist'. A passsing reference to any Communist Programme, from the Russian Communist Party to the Indian Communist Party, will prove this fact. Our programme, which we have framed with an eye to the special factors and conditions governing Indian life in all its aspects, is at most a programme of modified social democracy, such as is propagated in all the advanced countries of the west, and even in some of the east, notably Turkey. All the liberal-radical parties that have struggled to hold their own against a growing world-reaction, have adopted and set forth programmes in most respects similar to this. National independence, universal suffrage and the election of a National Assembly in which the popular sovereignty shall rest, is the basis of the programmes of Turkish, Egyptian and Irish nationalism,—programmes which have been partially realized, but only after a desperate struggle by means of armed resistance; not, as our nationalists would prefer, by means of 'suffering, self-sacrifice and soul-force'. The betrayal of the masses by those at the head of the Turkish 'Republic', 'Independent' Egypt and the Irish 'Free State', who struck a bargain with the enemy at the expense of the majority of their own people, has often been pointed out by us. It is to prevent such betrayal by a last-minute compromise with the Imperial overlord that we wish to see written in blazoned letters the social and economic clauses of our Programme of National Liberation and Reconstruction. A party which fights openly on a programme calling for the abolition of landlordism, reduction of land-rent, state-aid to agriculture and the abolition of all indirect taxation, will carry the Indian masses with it, and will not desist from the struggle until these measures, so indispensable to the improvement in the economic condition of our rural population, have been won. Similarly, the clauses calling for minimum wages in all industries, an eight-hour day, improved living conditions and protective legislation of workers, together with profit-sharing in big industries, the formation of Workers' Councils and a guarantee of the rights of labour to organize for its own protection and to strike,—such clauses will rally the ten million industrial proletariat to the banner of Nationalism and by their indispensable help, will sweep it along to victory.

To call such clauses 'Bolshevik' is absurd. Most of these safegurads and provisions to agricultural and industrial labour actually exist in the form of legislation in every enlightened country in the world. In England, France, Germany, not to mention the smaller countries of Europe, labour legislation protecting and insuring against old-age, sickness, unemployment and accidents, irrespective of party-programmes, has either long been in existence, as in Germany, or is being ceaselessly agitated for without incurring the stigma of 'Bolshevism'. Until the recognized rights of labour were infringed upon by the war, with its martial law and reactionary onslaughts on the hours of work, conditions of labour and standard of living of the working-class—the eight-hour day, minimum wage and enforcement of a certain standard of comfort to workers were guaranteed by law in most of the European countries. Only in the last two or three years, and that most incompletely, have the hard-fought and dearly-won right to organize and strike on the part of the European working-class, been interfered with by the reactionary ruling-class of the West in a manner acknowledged as 'unconstitutional', but justified by special legislation, the plea for 'increased production', or by out-and-out dictatorship and the destruction of all constitutional rights and privileges, such as the iron rule of Mussolini in Italy, now parading as international Fascism. In the United States of America, home of the most arbitrary onslaughts on the recognized status and rights of the working-class, the tradition of the eight-hour day is being fought for by prolonged strikes and a nation-wide campaign on the part of American labour. Altogether, with the exception of the clauses calling for abolition of landlordism and the abolition of indirect taxation, not one of the clauses of our programme stands for anything unique or unheard-of in the ordinary political life of the West.

Even for these two clauses, so necessary in view of the rack-rented condition of the Indian peasantry, instances can be cited, both historical and contemporaneous, which would fully justify a nationalist party in including such clauses on its programme, without risking the appellation of Bolshevism. The land-problem which formed the basis of the Russian Revolution, and which was solved in a revolutionary manner by the expropriation of all private property, including that in land, without compensation, is the only right solution. But we put forth for the benefit of our Indian nationalists nothing so unpleasantly drastic. We call only for the confiscation of all *large* estates without compensation. This has been done in Mexico, where the Madero Revolution of 1910 freed the Mexican peons from the bondage of big landlordism and distributed the land to the cultivators without compensating the owners, who naturally fought fiercely against their fate; but their number was so infinitesimal in comparison to the overwhelming needs of the peasantry, that they had to succumb, and despite frequent revolutions and counter-revolutions in Mexico from 1910 until today, the original confiscation still holds good. Similarly, in Ireland, however despicably the Free Staters sold themselves to Imperialism, they too had to recognize the unsolved land-problem and have been forced to *buy up* the greatest estates for distribution among the rack-rented peasantry, who are to be forced to pay for the land they have been granted, by generations of taxation which will go to swell the pockets of the landlords and their heirs.

The single tax, that upon land, has been long advocated by the school of Henry George in England, without being called 'Bolshevik'. All forms of indirect taxation are recognized by liberal opinion as undesirable and unjust, and the modern tendency in legislation is to avoid them whenever possible, but under capitalist dictatorship, this can never be fully realized, since the inevitable instinct is to shift the burden of taxation on to the shoulders of the poor, who being propertyless, can pay only by indirect means. The Labour Party's plea for the 'capital levy' upon wealth is an attempt to get at the rich and relieve the poor by a direct tax upon large incomes and properties. Will our Indian nationalists join with the *Morning Post* school of Imperialism in calling the British Labour Party 'Bolshevik?'

Our programme calls also for the nationalization of public utilities, such as railroads, canals, telegraphs, railways, lights, telephones, etc. This has been wholly or partially accomplished in all the advanced countries; here is no Bolshevism, but simple progressive good-government, practised wherever some form of democracy prevails in the teeth of plutocratic robbery and corruption. The introduction of free and compulsory education is now a commonplace everywhere. Will this also be dubbed 'Bolshevism', simply because the Russian Communist Party has enforced it as well upon the illiterate population of the ex-Czar? Separation of religion from the State, and the granting of full rights of citizenship to women can likewise be defended from the implication of Bolshevism; we have heard even our orthodox nationalists advocate such measures.

Where then, is the 'Bolshevism' in our programme? Wherein lies its danger to the established order of capitalist society? Have our Indian nationalists allowed themselves to be frightened by a shadow, waved in their faces by cunning Imperialism, which scents in our Programme a sure road to national liberation, since it rallies all classes of the people with the exception of the rankest reactionaries and 'loyalists', under the banner of national Freedom and Economic and Social Reconstruction? The Imperialist ruler cries 'Bolshevism'! 'Bolshevism'!—and our intrepid nationalists cover their ears and flee in terror, neither caring to look nor to analyse something which they vaguely fear attacks the vested interests of their class. Were this Bolshevism, they would perhaps be justified in their fears, since Bolshevism, when it comes, will sweep all special interests and privileges aside to make room for only one class—the producing class of the Indian society. But India is not yet ripe for Bolshevism. She must evolve through the stage of bourgeois democracy which, as Marx says, will call into being its own grave-diggers in the shape of a strong, class-conscious and militant Indian proletariat. Till that day, we Indian Communists must stand together with those honest nationalists who really desire the freedom of their country and the improvement in the condition of the people, and it is therefore that we offer them, not the Communist Programme, but a Programme of National Liberation and Reconstruction, which will carry them on to victory.

The Next Step*

A very sensational act in the drama of our national struggle is over. Non-cooperation Movement has been brought to a close. No sophistry, no loud talking to the gallery, which is being done amply, can change this fact. What has been accomplished at Delhi is nothing more or less than a total repudiation of the programme adopted at Calcutta. The programme of organizing a country-wide mass movement with the purpose of challenging the authority of the British government has been abandoned. The trend of things during the last year and a half was clearly to this direction. Therefore, to us as well as to everybody, who was not carried away by the rosy appearances, the Delhi decisions do not come as a surprise. We, particularly, have all along fearlessly laid bare the tendencies that were latent in the leadership of the Non-cooperation campaign. Our object in doing so has not been sterile criticism. We wanted to open the eyes of the revolutionary elements which are today thrown into utter confusion by the *volte face* even of those leaders who had the reputation of being the stalwarts of orthodox Gandhism. We were branded Bolsheviks actuated with the evil purpose of fomenting class hatred in a holy land where human beings are considered equal. Our audacity to question the wisdom of the leaders was certainly not relished. Our suggestions largely fell into deaf ears. Nevertheless, the logic of events has proved the correctness of our position. The apparently mighty Non-cooperation movement flourished, floundered and failed along the lines indicated by us. We don't claim to be prophets. What we want to impress upon the revolutionary elements of the contemporary Indian society is the soundness of the social philosophy, economic theories and political principles we profess. The other point we desire to make is that the life, struggle and progress of the Indian nation is bound to pursue generally the same lines followed by other nations. The doctrine that India will work out her destiny in her own peculiar way is erroneous. It serves no other purpose than to hinder the progress of revolution.

Now that the liquidation of the Non-cooperation campaign can no longer be obscured by phrases, the question that faces those who are not in conformity with this liquidation is: 'What next?'. The ability to answer this query requires a careful and objective study of the rise and fall of the great Non-cooperation movement. It is obviously impossible to make such a study here. The required study is made in other publications of our party. Here, only a cursory review can be made in order to strengthen the suggestions, which will be presently made, concerning the next steps to be taken for pushing the national struggle further ahead.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. III No. 5 and 6, 15 October and 1 November 1923. This was published as a double number issue although the total pages were as usual four. The previously used printer's line 'Emerald Press, Dublin, Ireland' disappeared from this issue. SNR

We need not go into history to prove that the Delhi decisions mean total repudiation of the Non-cooperation programme. The question of Council-entry is of little significance, in spite of the fact that it was made the butt of the whole controversy. The resolution to enter the reformed councils or to contest the election, by itself, does not constitute a violation of the original Non-cooperation programme. In fact, an amendment to this effect would strengthen the programme. The revolutionary significance of the Non-cooperation programme lay in the fact that its realization demanded mass action. The programme of paralysing the government could not be realized by the efforts, however sincere and determined they might be, of the educated few, a considerable section of whom again was voluntarily allied with the bureaucracy. The forces that make the existence of the present order possible, therefore, should be tapped. The existence of the British government is dependent upon neither the cooperating councillors, nor the practising lawyers, nor again the clerks and students. These have their relative importance. A concerted effort by all these elements to withhold their cooperation would certainly embarrass the government, but under no circumstances would make it impossible. Then, the very structure of the present order is such that it is well nigh impossible for these elements to non-cooperate with the government for any length of time. Therefore, the determination to paralyse the government by withholding all support presupposed the necessity of eventually falling back upon other social forces—forces that are more vital for the existence of the government and even the shortest period of non-cooperation which can seriously injure the government. These are the productive forces of the society, namely, the workers and peasants. The profit that British Imperialism makes out of its domination over India is not produced by the lawyers and students. Clerks contribute but little to it. The toil of the workers and peasants, who constitute more than 90 per cent of the population, goes into the accumulation of this profit. Any act that will cut into the source of this profit will weaken the position of the government. The very organization of the society is dependent primarily and principally upon the workers. The government will not necessarily collapse if the council chambers remain empty, the lawyers take to spinning and the school rooms are deserted. But even a week's cessation of work on the railways, in the harbours and other public utilities will throw everything out of gear. The refusal of the Indians to enlist in the army and that of the troops to fight will be the beginning of the end. Nearly 40 per cent of the entire revenue comes from the peasantry, only in the form of direct land rent. If this source of income is disturbed the whole structure of the state will crack.

We know as well as anyone else that these formidable forces cannot be brought into action overnight. What we desire to point out here is that the original Non-cooperation programme implied the necessity of invoking these forces of revolution. Had the programme been consciously conceived and determinedly acted upon we would not be where we are today. No sooner than the very sponsors of Non-cooperation realized what a dangerous path they had involuntarily trod upon than they began to sabotage the essential significance of the original programme. Delhi repudiation is but the logical consequence of Bardoli betrayal. By the end of 1921 it was clearly manifest that real non-cooperation was too big an affair to be confined within the limits of the programme perfunctorily adopted in Calcutta and ratified at Nagpur. The triple boycott was but a meagre vehicle for the expression of the revolutionary energies kindled in the country. The fullest mobilization of these energies was necessary if the programme of paralysing the government was to be earnestly carried through. But it was too much for the Congress which stood at the head of the gigantic movement. The idea of paralysing the government by withholding popular cooperation evolved out of the objective situation which did not permit any other form of direct fight with the established order. This spontaneously evolved form of struggle was taken up by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi whose subjective limitations, however, hedged in the revolutionary programme of non-cooperation. The wave of revolutionary mass movement, which alone could have led to the realization of the Non-cooperation programme, precipitated the clash between the objective and subjective factors that went into the making of the Non-cooperation campaign. The Congress succumbed in this fatal clash. The journey towards Delhi, then the Councils, the negotiation with the bureaucracy and finally compromise with Imperialism was begun.

Why blame those who have buried at Delhi the cadaver of Non-cooperation? The bewildered 'No-changers' today accuse their idol Mohammed Ali of having betrayed the heritage of the Mahatma. But it will be too realistic for them to think that Mohammed Alism is the inevitable consequence of political Gandhism. You cannot at the same time do and not do a thing till eternity. The Non-cooperation movement either had to be a revolutionary mass movement or die of inanition. When at Bardoli it decided not to be a mass movement it committed suicide. Now a form of struggle suitable for the masses is not suitable for the bourgeoisie. The triple boycott had some meaning so long as behind it loomed the possibility of a National Strike headed by the productive element of the nation. The vision of this National Strike was to be seen in the promised slogans of Non-payment of Taxes and Mass Civil Disobedience. Once these slogans were put away as something outside the realm of practical politics, the Calcutta programme became worthless. It rejected mass action, but insisted upon a form of struggle not applicable to the requirements of the upper classes. It consequently became necessary to formulate a new programme to devise other forms of struggle with Imperialism to be carried by the upper and middle classes. The collapse of Non-cooperation does not mean the end of national struggle which is the antithesis of foreign domination, and therefore must go on in some form or other.

At Delhi has been completed the task undertaken at Bardoli, namely, revolutionary mass action as a form of struggle for national liberation has been abandoned. The new programme adopted is the programme of constitutionalism; the tactics will be parliamentarism, negotiation and compromise. It cannot be otherwise, since the basis of the Congress has been shifted from one social class to the other. During the last three years it almost lost its upper class moorings and came dangerously near the masses. The balance has been recovered. The Congress has again become the respectable organ of bourgeois nationalism which may indulge in beautiful idealism and high rhetorics, but never forgets the pocket.

Now, the rank and file 'No-changers' are totally dismayed. They slept upon their illusive victory at Gaya and woke up to see the Congress leadership out of their hand. They are burning with righteous indignation because realism has induced others to call a scrap of paper a scrap of paper and not an article of faith. All they can do is to hurl anathema upon everybody on the authority of the Mahatma. But it will be of little avail. They stand face to face with a settled fact: the Congress has repudiated the Non-cooperation programme and reverted to constitutionalism which certainly will be more militant than that of pre-war days, because the bourgeoisie has developed considerably since then. But it will be constitutionalism nonetheless with the ultimate object of striking a bargain with Imperialism as to the respective share in the exploitation of the country and its productive forces.

This being the case, the next step for the social class, to which the 'No-changers' belong, obviously is to prepare for equally definite and determined action in accordance with the interests of those sections of the nation who will be little benefited by the policy to which the Congress is committed at Delhi. Non-cooperation movement collapsed because the Congress refused to mobilize and lead those revolutionary social forces that alone could make it a success. Those forces are still in the country. Their objective potentiality is no less today than in 1920–21, if not more. Those revolutionary patriots, who are not satisfied with the turn the Congress has taken at Delhi, should not waste their time in recrimination. Their slogan should be 'forward'. They should show that Non-cooperation is a powerful weapon. But they can only do it when they will learn from the voluntary or involuntary blunders of their leaders. They should invoke by all means those forces of revolution which were shunned by the Congress. The next step, therefore, is the organization of a *Peoples' Party* comprising all the exploited elements of our society. Such a party alone will carry the Non-cooperation programme to its logical consequences.*

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* In September 1920, at a Special Session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta, Gandhi himself moved the resolution according to which 'there was no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of non-violent Non-cooperation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi.' The resolution was contested by C. R. Das, Bepin Chandra Pal and others, but it was carried by 1880 delegates against 884. The Non-cooperation resolution was reaffirmed at the Nagpur Congress in December 1920.

The resignation of C. R. Das from the Presidentship after the Gaya Congress (December, 1922), the collapse of Non-cooperation and the formation of the Swaraj Party culminated in a compromise reached at the Special Session of the Congress at Delhi (September, 1923), presided over by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. A permissive resolution was passed at the Delhi Congress which suspended 'all propaganda against entering the Councils'.

B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress (1885–1935)*, 1935, p. 439. SNR.

Jawahar Lal's Speech*

The presidential address of Pundit Jawahar Lal to the U. P. Conference calls for more than passing notice. It is by far the most important pronouncement lately made by any outstanding personality in India. In asserting that 'the basis of Non-cooperation is direct action' he indicated the only way that should be followed by the revolutionary nationalists who are not satisfied with the neo-constitutionalism of the Swaraj Party. But the Pundtitji himself does not seem to quite understand what is direct action. Otherwise he would not make the statement that direct action cannot be carried on by large masses of people, but by a selected few. He appears to hold the masses responsible for the failure of Non-cooperation. This is an absolutely wrong view of the case. On various occasions during the last few years, the masses were ready to act, but it was the general staff of the Non-cooperation movement that held them back. Jawahar Lal betrays an ignorance of history when he states: 'No one can expect large masses of people to indulge continuously in direct action. Only the elect can do that, and the masses can sympathize with them and join them occasionally for a short time'. History shows the case to be the contrary. All great movements are carried through by the might and sacrifice of the masses and not by the elect, though the latter may appropriate the glory. He apparently does not agree with the Delhi compromise; of course as a revolutionary he cannot. But he endeavours to justify it by throwing the blame on the masses. He argues that it is necessary to go back a little 'to some kind of constitutional action whenever large numbers of people are tired of direct action'. The Congress has reverted to constitutionalism, not because it could not get the support of the masses for a programme of direct action, but because it was afraid of leading the revolutionary masses in the path of direct action. The masses that enthusiastically rallied round the standard of Non-cooperation did not get tired of 'continuous direct action'; on the contrary, their zeal to act was dampened by the timidity and indecision of the leadership which is, evidently, constituted from the 'elect' of the Punditji. Of course, if by the elect, Jawahar Lal means the conscious vanguard determined to lead the masses in the fight, he is right; and as one of this revolutionary vanguard, he is called upon to undo the wilful blunders committed by the Congress.

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* *The Vanguard* Vol. III No. 7, 15 November 1923. This appeared as a signed article by M. N. Roy under 'Notes and Comments' which followed the main editorial. SNR

The next important point in the speech is the declaration that complete separation from the British Empire is the goal of the Indian nationalist movement. For the first time, it has been stated authoritatively that our fight is not against bureaucracy, that is, a certain *form* of administration, but against Imperialism. Indian nationalism does not strive for some modification in the relationship between the Indian people and the British overlord. What is wanted is the end of this relation. As the Punditji made clear, free India may have all sorts of relations with Britain as an equal but no equality is possible on the basis of Imperialism. This revolutionary formulation of the political programme of Indian nationalism is very timely, in view of the fact that the programme of the Swaraj Party, which to all practical purposes has captured the Congress, has removed the ambiguity in which the Non-cooperators preferred to leave the question. Complete independence is not a question of dignity, nor should it be a creed. It wil also be ridiculous to declare outright that India is independent. The independence of India should be the first clause in the programme of Indian nationalism. Not only the liberals representing the propertied upper classes, but also the middle class Swarajists will be satisfied with some measures of self-government leading up to Dominion Status. This programme does not take the interests of the majority of the people in consideration. Larger measure of Self-government, even Dominion Status will not materially alter the politico-economic condition of the masses, including the propertyless lower middle class. Greater opportunities will be conceded to Indian capital; and more political power will come into the hands of the propertied classes; but the people at large will remain politically disfranchised and economically enslaved. British Imperialism will take the Indian upper classes into political partnership, only on condition that its right to exploit the Indian masses economically is not seriously contested. Therefore, the programme of Dominion Status cannot rally the majority of the people under the banner of the Congress. In this connection nothing better can be done than to quote Jawahar Lal's words:

> 'I suppose there is hardly an Indian who does not in his heart of hearts desire independence, but there are many who dare not say so—many who think that it is unwise to make the assertion at this stage. Let us get rid of this mentality—this cowardice. We may not be strong enough to gain our object for a while, but we should be brave enough to declare it and work for it.'

It should only be added that it is not a matter of cowardice or heroism; the desire of independence is born out of material necessity. Those who talk of Dominion Status do not do so out of cowardice. They will be satisfied with Dominion Status, because it will meet, at least temporarily, their economic demands. The majority of the people must fight for complete independence, because *no compromise with imperialism will better their economic conditions.*

This revolutionary pronouncement of Jawahar Lal, however, is rendered meaningless by his philosophy of Non-violence. He still suffers from the malady of Gandhism, which does not allow him to take a realistic view. His denunciation of terrorism is correct and incorrect at the same time. It is incorrect politically. Spasmodic acts of violence do not lead anywhere. Revolutionary energy is only dissipated thereby. But the ethical scruples of the Punditji are utterly mistaken. Why condemn the ardent youths who have been driven into the blind alley of futile terrorism by disillusionment? They are mistaken, but they are idealists. Show them the highroad of Revolution, instead of condemning them on moral grounds. These romantic revolutionaries suspended their activities with the hope that something consoling for them would come out of the Non-cooperation movement. When some of them desired to participate in the Non-cooperation movement, they were treated as outcasts who could be taken into the sacred folds of Gandhism only on their making public penance. The collapse of Non-cooperation and the non-revolutionary nature of its leadership have thrown these young enthusiasts back upon their own resources. Instead of declaring them moral culprits, the Punditji should find in them the material for his 'elect', which would act as the conscious vanguard of the masses. But this demands a more realistic leadership on the part of Jawahar Lal. He will not get these misled revolutionaries to follow him in such ridiculous theatricals as the Flag Demonstration; something more dynamic should be found. Through these youths is expressed the violent energy, which will have to be invoked sooner or later for the realization of the political programme formulated by the Punditji himself. But the pacifist prejudices of Jawahar Lal get him into troubles. He is entangled in philosophic fallacies. He proposes to destroy the mightiest Imperialism that the world has ever seen, but he sings the song of love and peace. This confused outlook lands him in such a queer position that he loses all perspective and is unable to distinguish black from white. In his bewilderment he says:

'Bolshevism and Fascism are the ways of the West today. They are really alike and represent different phases of insensate violence and intolerance. The choice for us is between Lenin and Mussolini on the one hand and Gandhi on the other. Can there be any doubt as to who represents the soul of India today?'

Beautiful as a peroration, but all wrong historically and politically. One cannot be expected to do better, when an attempt is made to understand the great world currents, taking the ethical concept of violence versus non-violence as the standard. If our nationalists of the type of Jawahar Lal would care to learn anything outside Indian history, it would be apparent to them that the programme of Bolshevism is no more bloodthirsty than Gandhism, although there is no other point of contact between the two. It is not the teachings of Bolshevism that have driven it to violence. It was thrust upon the Bolsheviks either to turn traitors to their programme, or to take up the challenge and defend it. If Jawahar Lal will remain true to his ideal, if he will conquer the freedom of the Indian people, he will find his ethical formulas unavailing. It is only deplorable ignorance that can herd Lenin and Mussolini, Bolshevism and Fascism together, merely because both use violence. Then, Jawahar Lal has no patience for impatience. Well, in that case his outburst does not mean anything. If he would damn the Bolsheviks, because they could not tolerate the Czar and his retinue of landlords and capitalists, who sucked the life-blood of the Russian people, by what ethical code can he justify his intolerance for the British in India? Yes, he can argue that his intolerance is Gandhian: it is not violent. Well, history will prove that. The impossibility of riding on the two horses of *Ahimsa* and Revolution will be soon revealed.

It is not possible to correct Jawahar Lal's wrong ideas about the cause of the present chaotic state of the world in a short article. This may be done on some other occasion. Meanwhile he would do better to learn something about Bolshevism, Fascism and such other burning world topics before passing judgement on them so light-heartedly. If Gandhism still represents the soul of India, as Jawahar Lal believes, then the day of her liberation is far off. The spirit of Mussolini is not hard to find in India. The weakness of Indian nationalism lies not only in its pacifist prejudices, but in its fascist (reactionary jingoist) tendencies. When our disillusioned lower middle-class forsakes Gandhism it hails Mussolini as the prophet. But the soul of real India, that is of the majority who toil and starve, will be stirred to action not by the reactionary pacifism of Gandhi nor by the nationalist jingoism of Mussolini; it will only respond to the little known but much maligned programme of Bolshevism, that is, a programme which will stand for the economic liberation and social emancipation of the toiling masses. India will be free only through the conscious action of these potential followers of Bolshevism. Many a river of blood will have to be traversed and many a tenet of reactionary nationalism will have to be forgotten before that goal is realized.

M. N. Roy

The Cult of Non-Violence
Its Socio-Economical Background*

The spiritual character of India's national struggle has been so much emphasized that to the naive sentimentalist its real significance has been altogether lost. The cult of non-violence, which runs rampant through the philosophy of Indian nationalism, has been invested with a religio-cultural halo. The average nationalist passionately adheres to it, and preaches it without even suspecting that something very mundane can be lurking behind this unearthly aureole. The dream of delivering suffering humanity from the bondage of a material civilization, based on brute force, is so intoxicating to a people with hardly anything else to make it forget its own bondage, that all sense of reality is drowned in a melancholy pride. This dream, however, is not dreamt by the entire people. It is only the middle class, particularly the lower strata, which is sinking steadily into the dreary depths of economic bankruptcy, which is the victim, complete and hopeless. The upper classes may also appear to be dreaming this ridiculous dream, but they are too realistic to lose their balance. They have too much at stake in this material world to be fascinated by an imaginary vision. The masses of the people are too engrossed in the all-absorbing struggle for existence to bother about the spiritual mission of India.

Now, whence does this dream come? And how has it acquired such a grip on the mentality of the middle class? These questions are to be answered for the future welfare of the Indian people. It is not healthy for a nation, which feels hunger more than any other sensation, to be fed continuously upon spiritual moonshine. The cult of non-violence exercises a deadening effect on the popular energy, and the inevitable consequence of it is the weakening of the national struggle.

We are not engaged here in the task of analysing the merits and demerits of non-violence as against violence, or vice-versa. Nor do we propose to expose the ridiculousness of the pet hobby of saving the wicked wordly by the spiritual teachings of a nation that cannot save itself materially. Our object here is to examine the material background upon which the religio-ethical theory of non-violence is reared. This examination is necessary to open the eyes of those honest nationalists who accept this theory, without suspecting that quite a material motive may give birth to it and foster its glorification.

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* *The Vanguard*, Vol. III No. 8, 1 December 1923. SNR

The examination we propose to make requires some historical reminiscences and the enunciation of the fundamental principle of nationalism. Of course, it should be pointed out that we do not accept the theory that nationalism on the soil of India is entirely cultural. As in any other country, it is primarily a political issue, and we propose to deal with it as such. We know that man is not a political animal, nor is human society a voting machine. It is no less so in the West than in India. But the first requisite for a particular people to make its full contribution to the accumulated store of human knowledge and culture is its material existence. Just as an individual must have his physical requirements satisfied before he can develop finer human attributes, just so is the case with a community. The cultural achievement of the primitive human society was very meagre when man had to spend all his time and all his energy in the struggle for physical existence. In proportion as the problem of material existence is solved, in proportion as the leisure at the disposal of man increases, this energy is turned into other channels; and the human animal, individually and collectively, begins to develop those finer attributes that are called intellectual, cultural and spiritual. These fundamental laws underlie the progress of every human community. In course of this progress, which is dynamic, every such community develops a political existence. Therefore, it is wrong to condemn politics as a purely material thing, nor can it be spiritualized by any stretch of the imagination. Indian nationalism may be remotely a cultural movement, but immediately it is a political one, because the cultural future of the Indian people cannot be guaranteed without defending its material existence and progress. The will to defend its material existence and to insure its normal progress is the motive-force of the nationalism that has, of late, affected practically all the strata of Indian society.

Looking into history, we do not find any trace of the cult of non-violence in Indian nationalism in its earlier days. It is a mistake to think that the inauguration of the Non-cooperation movement marks the birth of Indian nationalism. The Non-cooperation movement is only a phase of the national consciousness of India, which made itself felt already in the eighties of the last century, when the National Congress was born. From 1882 until 1919 Indian nationalism developed through various stages, but there was no talk of its regenerating the violence-ridden world by the philosophy of non-violence. This element was introduced by Gandhi, just at the moment when the movement had attained maturity and was entering the first period of revolutionary activity. It should be noted in passing that the terrorist outbursts beginning from 1907 could not be called revolutionary action in the proper sense of the term. The revolutionary potentiality of

Indian nationalism became manifest only when the broad masses of the people were affected by it. This happened partially during the war, but completely not till 1918. So, we discover the curious phenomenon that as soon as Indian nationalism assumed openly revolutionary proportions, the cult of Non-violence was introduced into it by Gandhi. In other words, when the forces were set in motion for the political freedom of India—freedom which is the pre-requisite for the accomplishment of any other higher mission that may be reserved for the Indian nation—precisely then began the preaching of the cult of Non-violence, which is declared to be the special characteristic of India, but which for all practical purpose only obstructed and will obstruct the development of these revolutionary forces.

This fact concerning the introduction of the cult of Non-violence into Indian nationalism throws a new light on the whole question. It shows the way to the socio-economic background of the cult which has since become the main article of faith of Indian nationalism.

Much has been said of the emphasis Gandhi put upon the doctrine of Non-violence. The two extreme theories are: 1. It was to him a religion, and politics played a secondary role; 2. It was a measure of expediency to put the movement beyond the Indian Penal Code. The first cannot be admitted, because Non-violence has exceeded the bounds of a personal creed; while the second is utterly mechanical. The reason is to be searched deeper, in the realm of material necessity, which is the prime-mover of nationalism. Here is what the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has to say on the matter. In its editorial of 4 October this classical exponent of the cult of Non-violence writes:

'The idea of Non-cooperation was not really the creation of Mahatma Gandhi. What he did was simply to find organized and outer expression to the latent discontent in the country. Mahatma Gandhi saw the danger of this latent discontent. *He did not want* that this discontent should be left to itself and burst out in fatal physical revolt or revolution . . . . This was the true inwardness of his campaign'.

We know that there are many who would not recognize the *Patrika* as the faithful interpreter of Gandhism; but the same thesis can be easily established from the sayings, writings and acts of the Mahatma himself. We are, however, not concerned with the personality of Gandhi. Our object is to expose the fact that the cult of non-violence is not a spontaneous expression of the nature of the Indian people, but, on the contrary, expounded and preached (no matter by whom) in order to thwart the development of dynamic revolutionary forces which threaten to push Indian nationalism dangerously farther than the so-called politically-minded class desired it to go. The cult of Non-violence was smuggled into Indian nationalism by the dictates of purely mundane desire. The principal instruments in this act of smuggling might not have been cognizant of the significance of what they were doing; but this does not alter the real purpose served by the cult of Non-violence, namely the security of the vested interests in the face of the menacing forces of revolution.

Political Nationalism is a material thing, and the Indian nationalist movement is primarily political. This being the case, the theory and tactics of Indian nationalism must be determined by material considerations. If Non-violence has come to be a cardinal principle of Indian nationalism, it is because material considerations demand it to be so. That section of the Indian people, which stood at the head of the nationalist movement until the fateful days of 1918 till 1919, did not desire a radical change in the structure of the Indian society. They wanted, in the extreme case, to be the rulers of the country in the place of foreign government; but nothing was farther from their mind than any disruption in the socio-economic system obtaining under British rule. So long as this was generally accepted as the objective of the national movement, there was no danger involved in it. But the unexpected appearance of the rebellious masses on the scene of nationalism changed its character objectively. The constitutional and administrative readjustment, which had so far been the end sought for by the nationalism of the upper classes, could not be expected to satisfy the demands of the entire people, when the consciousness of the latter would be fully awakened. The social basis of nationalism was broadened; consequently the theory of nationalism must also be revised. For the first time in its history, the revolutionary significance of nationalism became evident. It became clear that the logical sequence of this reinvigorated nationalism would be a desire, not for the simple transference of the political power from the hand of the foreign ruler to that of the native upper class, but such far-reaching revolutionary changes in the socio-economic as well as in the political sphere as would open the way for the normal progress of the entire people. This eventually threatened more than the termination of British domination; it constituted itself into a menace to the entire social traditions and economic system, which sanctioned from time immemorial class-rule, even on the holy soil of India. In one word, nationalism came dangerously near to becoming a revolutionary movement.

This had not been what the 'politically-minded' upper classes had in view when they contested British authority in the name of nationalism. But it was not possible to retrace the steps taken. The hand of history cannot be set back. Besides, for the sake of their own development, the upper classes of the Indian people must challenge British absolutism. The necessity of carrying on the struggle against the British politico-economic monopoly from the point of view of upper-class interests, without provoking however the forces of revolution latent in the masses of the people, gave birth to the cult of spiritualism in politics. The corollary thereof was the doctrine of soul-force, suffering, passive resistance and all the rest that constituted Gandhism. The object was to discourage the spirit of revolt, which, once kindled, cannot be expected to be kept within specified limits.

Thus, we find the Moderate politicians declare Swaraj to be harmful just now; the apostle of Extremism Bepin Pal proclaims in this election manifesto his desire to maintain the imperial bond for the welfare of India and for world-peace; and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (25 October) writes:

'The moment this inert mass commences to move, it will spell fatal revolution among us, before which both the educated Indians and the British rulers will be equally swept away. When this leviathan moves, both Moderates and the Extremists, along with their common enemy, the Bureaucracy, will be equally crushed under its mammoth feet. How to prevent this catastrophe is the root problem just now before both the educated leaders of the people and the representatives of the government.'

The cult of non-violence was invented precisely for the solution of this problem which worries the leaders of nationalism no less than the agents of Imperialism. So much so, that the day may not be far distant when the two will bury their hatchet in order to carry on the crusade against those forces of revolution which menace the security of the vested interests.

Such is the socio-economic background of the cult of non-violence. It is not the cornerstone of Indian nationalism. On the contrary, it is the clever stratagem of the upper class to head off a revolutionary convulsion, without which nationalism will never come into its own, although the debris of our old society will be swept away, along with the British rule, by this convulsion. The cult of non-violence, therefore, is meant to serve the interests of those who have built castles of social privilege and economic exploitation upon this stinking debris. If the end of nationalism is to glorify these privileged few, then non-violence is certainly useful; but to nationalism of a broader kind, which is the expression of the desire of the entire Indian people, it is a positive hindrance.

The sentimental nationalists belonging to the lower middle class fall victim to this upper class propaganda, because they dare not face the reality. They cannot call their own anything but a naive class prejudice. They are always ready to run after any chimera. This pitiable psychological attitude of theirs is fully exploited by the clever agents of the upper class, who can thus turn them into ardent propagandists in the cause of the vested interest. Those who talk of non-violence as the basic principle of Indian nationalism and dream the fond dream of showing the wicked world the path to salvation, may be perfectly sincere (which in this case means ignorant); but they are only helping the sacrifice of Indian nationalism on the altar of the upper classes.

M. N. Roy

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'Spiritual Communism': A Criticism*

It is a rumour that just before his death Lord Northcliff had been suffering from an obsession about child-birth. He could not help talking of it in every article he wrote, be it on the 'Japanese Menace' or Dutch Imperialism in the Pacific or the Reparation Problem. Laws or freaks of nature determining the decrease or increase of birth-rate appeared to Lord Northcliff to be the motive-force behind all the international complications of the twentieth century. This mania of the noble lord is said to have grown so ridiculously acute that he was declared to be in an unsteady state of mind, and his articles were subjected to strict censorship by his employees before publication.

What child-birth was to Northcliff, 'spiritualism' is to our political anchorite Arabinda Ghose. The ailment in both the cases is called in the language of psycho-analysts, mental complex. Of course, the cult of spiritualism is no monopoly of Arabinda. In India, apostles of this cult are as plentiful as its devotees. But Arabinda represents the acme of the cult. So much so that he is not content with the quixotic programme of spiritualizing politics, but would make socio-political progress of the Indian people conditional upon attaining 'supramental' state. Poor Indian people! what a price you are called upon to pay for the leadership offered you unsolicited! Not only the limitations of flesh are to be transcended, but even one is required to go out of mind! Arabinda Ghose is out to 'Spiritualize' even the monstrous doctrine of Communism. He enunciates his gospel thus: 'Spiritual Communism is a creative gospel. It aims at the evolution of a new human society founded upon spirituality.'

Had this complex of spiritualism been an individual idiosyncrasy, we could leave it alone. But it is not so. Attempt is made to make it the philosophical foundation of Indian Nationalism; therefore this doctrine merits refutation. Nor can it be dismissed as a personal mania, because it grows out of the cultural background of the Indian society. The *Standard-Bearer*, an organ of Arabindaism, prescribes for our national regeneration a 'spiritual awakening of the masses'. The reactionary tendency implied in this doctrine is not understood by the average nationalist who, in the absence of a better programme, must have some illusion to hold on. It is necessary to expose the erroneousness of this pernicious theory.

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* *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*, Vol. IV No. 1, 15 December 1923. Signed article by M.N. Roy. SNR

The object of Sri Arabinda and his disciples is very laudable. It is so when their sincerity is taken for granted; and we have no reason to question their sincerity. They want to build a new society free from the filth and dirt of the present system. A noble mission indeed. The present social order is by no means ideal. Further progress of humanity demands a radical change in the existing order. The desire to liberate human society from 'conflict of separative egoism' is to be appreciated. But this desire is very vague, and the means suggested for the realization of this desire are vaguer still. Arabinda and his followers propose to liberate humanity from the bonds of the present social order by saying a prayer, as it were. Unlike the present human society, that of his imagination 'establishes itself on the firm foundation of harmony and unity of being'. To imagine a perfectly faultless society, however, does not alter the present which has come into being through a long process of evolution, and as such, cannot be made non-existent by simply shutting our eyes. A spiritual basis for a new social order is taken for granted. But where is that basis? How is the 'foundation of harmony and unity of being' to be laid? Does it not still remain in the imagination of a visionary? Poetries (sic) can be written about the gloriousness of this new society which, however, remains unrealizable, because it starts from an abstract conception without any bearing on the realities of life.

'Spiritual Communism starts with a new conception and experience of man—the realization of the supramental and spiritual being.' It is indeed a novel conception; but it is a false conception at the same time; this conception is wrong, because it does not take into consideration the realities concerning the evolution of man individually and collectively. If the human society were to start with such a conception, it would never start. But it did start and has gone a long way through hundreds of centuries of experience and progress. Of course, the Apostle of spiritualism holds that humanity is in such a sad plight, because it started with a wrong conception; and he suggests that introduce a new conception and everything will be cured as if by magic. But the question is how to introduce the new conception? Where is the beginning to be made? Furthermore, human society did not start with any conscious conception of its goal at all. It evolved out of a moving mass of matter. We know here lies the point of difference between the realists and the preachers of spiritualism. If we look into the origin of human society, not in the light of mythological doctrines nor through the coloured glasses of mysticism, but with the help of accumulated human knowledge, what is discovered is only a blind struggle for existence. This struggle for existence still continues to be the motive behind all human energy, the difference being that a large element of consciousness has been introduced into it in course of evolution. A radical readjustment of human relations, in other words, a revolutionary transformation of the present social order together with all the economic institutions, legal codes and ethical conceptions on which it is based, is required for further progress and also for the very existence of human society. If the present order is to be replaced by a new one, it is not for any spiritual end, nor for the attainment of a 'supramental' state, but to open up the way for further progress of man individually and collectively in every walk of life. This inevitable social revolution will be brought about not by the introduction of a 'new conception' which calls for the 'realization of the supramental and spiritual being' as the prerequisite, but under the pressure of material urges. While this is the human nature of the human society, the 'spiritual society' of Sri Arabinda 'accepts the present arrangements and order, but accepts only to take up and transform the imperfect system and remould it in the spirit and type of a living spiritual realization of oneness and soul unity.'

Frankly speaking, this is nothing but a meaningless jumble of words uttered by one lost in the labyrinth of his own fantastic imagination. You cannot transform the present order rooted deep on account of its solid material foundation, by reciting some aphorism. Your flights into the regions of abstraction will not affect in any way the present order. The Hindu Scriptures and philosophical codes are full of records of such flights. But that did not prevent the Indian society from being what it is today; and in all essentials it is not much different from other communities. 'It is a balance of different and antagonistic claims'. Is it not idle to think that all these animosities and antagonisms inherent in the present order of society can be cured by any other means than to strike radically at the very root cause of all these essential characteristics of it? And the cause of these antagonisms is not ethical and cannot be removed by a breath of spiritual doctrine. Man in course of his development has built the present order of society, and he will build a new one on the ruins of the old as soon as the latter obstructs his further progress. Human history is a continuous process of evolution. You cannot build the future by completely repudiating the past. Both are linked up organically.

The Spiritual Communism of Arabinda Ghose is a mixture of Hegelian Idealism and Hindu Mysticism. Consequently, it is incapable of studying the process of human evolution from the right angle of vision. It takes its stand on the assumption of a spiritual existence behind phenomenal. Then it believes that the spiritual essence is all good and the phenomenal is all evil. For it, the human life is a struggle between these two antagonistic principles of good and evil. Or, in other words, human society is reduced to an ethical problem only glorified by a mystic conception of an abstract spiritual, supramental existence. Is it any wonder that those actuated by such philosophy will teach that the national regeneration of the Indian people is to be attained by meditation! And this is what Sri Arabinda prescribes when he declares 'the soul-being' to be the central and intimate truth of man's life and existence.

Human progress, however, has not been actuated by any eternal, abstract Idea, nor by the inspiration of a soul-being. It has been done, is being done and will be done by material forces. The primitive man did not start his life for spiritual realization, but for preserving his existence against the overwhelming forces of nature that surrounded him. The mission of man is not soul-realization, but the conquest of the forces of nature. In the earlier days man was subordinated to the whims of natural forces. If he had taken these forces as the expression of some superhuman existence, he would never have reached where he is today. Today he is almost the master of Nature. In course of his struggle for existence in the beginning, and subsequently in his efforts to conquer the forces of nature, man was forced to develop into a social being. Community life necessitated ethical laws to determine human relations. The rest of the moral and spiritual concepts gradually evolved out of this background which is primarily and essentially material.*

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* Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950) had been one of the principal ideologists of revolutionary nationalism at the turn of the century and leader of the revolutionary underground in Bengal from 1906 to 1908. Roy (at that time Naren) had been briefly his student and associate. Arrested in 1908, Aurobindo claimed to have a spiritual vision in jail; he was acquitted and released with the aid of his lawyer, Chitta Ranjan Das. He withdrew from politics, settled in the French territory of Pondicherry, and subsequently in collaboration with a French lady, Mira Richard, developed his famous ashram where his time was fully devoted to meditation and writing. SNR

Swaraj and the Councils*

The elections, which during the last half a year overshadowed all other nationalist activities, are over. The problem of to be or not to be concerning the relation of the National Congress with the Reformed Councils is solved. It is to be desired that the Congress, that is, the so-called no-change wing will no longer waste breath and time in keeping this controversy alive. A definite step has been taken. The best policy now will be to go ahead with determination and explore all the possibilities of the new path chosen. Of course, this advice is not required by the Swaraj Party. They, at least their leadership, is not groping in the dark. They know quite clearly what they are about. And they have made it amply clear. Divested of rhetorics, the programme of the Swaraj Party is an envigorated version of the programme of the so-called Moderates. It proposes to acquire Swaraj by 'constitutional means'. The Swarajists have scored a decisive victory, if not in the Councils, certainly in the Nationalist movement. They have, on the one hand, conquered the Congress which henceforth will be their party apparatus and on the other, they have snatched from the routed Liberals the Political leadership of the progressive bourgeoisie. It is a big victory. Mr C. R. Das can be congratulated upon making good his determination to turn the defeat into victory.

It is the no-changers who should be advised to recognize a settled fact. They are defeated, and they should have the courage to admit it. To accept a defeat, however, does not necessarily impose upon one the obligation of following the opponent. That wing of the Congress, which does not believe in the programme of the Swaraj Party, cannot maintain its position only by virtue of criticizing that programme. This negative attitude does not suffice. A positive stand should be taken. A counter-programme should be put forward. The victory of the Swaraj Party does not necessarily denote that their programme is the only programme which the Congress can have. It only proves that the previous programme was defective, and could not stand the test of actualities. Now, what the no-changers propose to do is to stick to the programme which has become threadbare and has been rejected by the Congress. This position cannot be maintained forever.

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* *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*, Vol IV, No. 2, 1 January 1924. Signed article by M.N. Roy. SNR

There are two alternatives before the no-change wing: either to abdicate, throw away its programme and follow the lead of the Swaraj Party; or, to look over the ground, discover the causes of defeat and to go forward with the determination to reconquer the leadership of the movement. The second alternative may be rejected in the name of unity of the movement. But it is a mistake to think that the birth of a revolutionary nationalist party, which will be free from the half-heartedness of the Non-cooperation programme and will reject as inadequate the Swarajist programme, will in any way be harmful to the movement.

It is simply naive to believe that the Congress is a united party; nor is it possible that all the classes of the Indian people will fight for freedom under the same banner. The Nationalist Movement as a whole is bound to be composed of a number of parties being the political expression of the several strata of the people. The existence of several parties with their respective programmes and organization does not, however, preclude the formation of a united front against Imperialism. Such party groupings do not weaken the nationalist cause; on the contrary, they add to its strength. The very fact that the Congress has ceased to be a self-contained body indicates that the potentiality of the nationalist movement as a whole has increased. It shows that more than one class of the people is participating in the struggle for freedom. So long as the opulent upper classes were the only discontented element, the Congress was a tame show of respectability; then came in the middle class, and the holiday calm of the Congress was somewhat disturbed, but it still remained an instrument of constitutional agitation; lastly, the awakening of the masses threw the Congress into a whirlpool of revolutionary ferment. It was thrown off its original gear and went through several years of nerve-wracking storm and stress. It became impossible for the Congress to fight with a uniform programme when it came to be the rallying ground of so many diverse and often conflicting social elements. In this period of ferment several political tendencies were crystallized representing the socio-economic needs of the different elements participating in the movement. The conflict between these tendencies was inevitable; and this conflict gave birth to the necessity of the rise of political parties.

Leaving aside the Liberals, who had left the Congress at the first indication of its ill-calculated revolutionary venture, the rise of the Swaraj Party was the first product of the situation. The Non-cooperation ranks were split not by an accident. The split happened in logical course of events. The carrying out of the original Non-cooperation programme implied mass action which is essentially a revolutionary weapon. The leadership of the movement represented a class which was not inclined to take the risky road of revolution. The repudiation of mass action in any form robbed the Non-cooperation movement of its revolutionary significance. What was left of it was the so-called Constructive Programme which is neither constructive nor a programme. The masses, who till then had been the dynamic power of the Non-cooperation movement, were pushed to the background. The upper middle class took advantage of the situation, came forward and imposed its programme of constitutionalism upon the Congress. But the discontent and rebelliousness of the masses still remained a vital factor in the national struggle; and the economically ruined lower middle class had still to find a political expression. The Swaraj Party embodied the political tendency of one wing of the Non-cooperators. The other, which constitutes the rank and file, and is by far the more numerous wing, has still to find its political platform. This is the task the no-changers are called upon to perform.

If the no-change wing fails to rise up to its responsibility and provide the masses that rallied under the banner of Non-cooperation with a suitable political instrument by organizing a revolutionary nationalist party, it will tacitly choose the first alternative, namely to abdicate and follow the lead of the Swaraj Party. But this abject capitulation of the leaders will not remove the objective necessity of another party which will re-mobilize the demoralized lower middle class and the scattered masses, both of which social elements have no room in the folds of the Swaraj Party. If the sulking attitude of the lower middle class (this was what the resolution of Council-boycott really meant) did not suit the political inclination of the upper middle class, the constitutional scruples of the latter can hardly prove sufficient to realize that degree of freedom without which Swaraj will mean nothing to the former. Therefore, in the name of unity the no-change leaders may capitulate and deliver the Congress to neo-constitutionalism; the causes for the development of a new party, however, will still be there.

How can the organization of a new party, which will eventually wrest the leadership of the nationalist movement from the Swarajists, be reconciled with the obvious necessity of a united anti-imperialist front? How can unity of the national cause be maintained while there will be two parties fighting for leadership? In answering these queries some advice can be given to the no-changers. By introducing some elasticity in their politics they can strengthen the nationalist movement and turn their defeat into victory at the same time.

First of all, it is necessary for the no-changers to admit that boycott of Councils was a wrong tactic. There are no two opinions as to the worthlessness of the Councils. But the fact remains that they are there and that in them there is a new avenue through which Imperialism can be assailed. Let there be no illusion; and here we differ from the

Swarajists. As they are, the Councils are no half-way, not even a quarter-way house to Swaraj. Yes, through them the vision of Dominion Status can be perceived looming far way off. But the road to national freedom does not lie through these pseudo-parliamentary bodies. National freedom can be won and will be won through a revolution which transcends the confines of the Council chamber. To marshall an entire nation for the struggle for freedom, to mobilize all the forces in battle array, however, cannot be done overnight, nor by perfunctory agitation. All available means are to be exploited to arouse the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people, on the one hand, and to embarrass and discredit the government, on the other. The reformed Councils provided us with a splendid means of this nature. Had the Congress as a party contested the first elections, the revolutionary situation then reigning in the country would have been immensely accentuated. Judging from the unexpectedly large number of Swarajist candidates returned in the dull atmosphere prevailing at present, it can be asserted that Non-cooperation candidates could have entered the Councils in majority in 1920. Then it would have been possible either to adopt an obstructionist policy inside the Councils, or to boycott them in a body. Another election might have followed with a still better chance for the Non-cooperators. The possibilities of such a situation were immense. Ireland set the example. It is, however, no use talking of what has not been done. Let us consider what can be done and what should be done. Only the past mistakes should not be forgotten so that we can be better guided in the future.

Now, a number of Swarajists have entered the Provincial as well as Central legislature.[1] Nowhere, except in the Central Provinces, they are in a majority. They don't even constitute a powerful minority unless in coalition with the Independents who are nothing more than the Left wing of the Liberals. In this situation it is hardly to be expected that any of the formidable threats uttered in the pre-election days can be translated into action. The Swaraj Party inside the legislatures is much more adulterated than outside. A considerable number of the members elected nominally on Swaraj Party tickets frankely do not subscribe to many points in the party programme. The Mahratta wing of the party, which is certainly the most consolidated politically and best equipped intellectually, make no secret of their adhesion to the doctrine of responsive cooperation. Many a leader of the party in the Assembly, notably Pundit Moti Lal Nehru, are known to have been in favour of the Reforms uptil the Amritsar Congress. Then, the Independents are a heavy load which the party can ill-afford if it desires to stand faithfully by its programme and make good its lavish promises. The adhesion of the Independents to a Nationalist Opposition can only be secured at the expense of some of the vital planks in the Swarajist programme, notably the scheme of wrecking. The demand for Self-government, to be presented, must also be moderated, should the signatures of the Independents be secured. Therefore, left alone, the Swaraj Party will cut a sorry figure inside the Councils, and their debacle in the Councils will discredit them outside. Such an eventuality will spell a great set-back to the national struggle as a whole. It will be a blunder for the no-changers to expect that the debacle of the Swarajists will give new impetus to orthodox Non-cooperation. The days are passed when the movement could go on with a bunch of vague formulas. The political situation has been clarified. Parties with clearly defined programmes must appear. If the Swaraj Party is not pushed to the Left, that is, if it is not forced towards a revolutionary situation, it will move to the Right—it will be captured by the spirit of Liberalism.

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[1] At the Gaya Congress supporters of Council entry were defeated by 1740 to 890 votes. However in September, 1923, the Congress at a special Session at Delhi resolved that 'Congressmen . . . are at liberty to stand as candidates . . . at the forthcoming election'. In the general elections in November 1923 the Swaraj Party founded by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru won 42 out of 101 elective seats in the Central Legislature, but with the support of independent members led by Jinnah it was assured of an absolute majority. The Congress at Gandhi's initiative now suspended non-cooperation and gave its formal approval to the Swaraj Party working in the Councils. SNR

This unwelcome eventuality can be avoided if the parliamentary action of the Swaraj Party can be backed up by extra-parliamentary mass action. Here is the opportunity for the no-changers. Those who do not believe in the Councils should not sulk and harp on the ridiculous cant that to enter the Councils is against religion. Nor does it strengthen the movement as a whole if they stand neutral in the name of unity. If they are sincere in their profession of unity, let them stand by everybody who is assailing the monopoly of Imperialism in any form or from any quarter. To help the Swarajists put up a stiff fight in the Councils will be encroaching upon the preserves of the bureaucracy. As indicated above, the precarious position of the Swarajists in the Councils is due to their dependence upon lukewarm elements. It will be a great act to release them from this unholy alliance.

Extra-parliamentary mass action cannot, however, be organized and led by a party clearly committed to the programme of bourgeois nationalism. In other words, a programme advocating the interests of the upper classes cannot infuse enthusiasm in the masses. The Swaraj Party is such a party; therefore it is not in a position to lead the masses in the struggle. It will complain of the apathy of the masses and declare the so-called politically-minded classes to be the saviours and salt of the nation. The masses can be organized and led only by a party which demands national freedom for the economic benefit and social uplift of the masses. The failure of Non-cooperation proves that a great mass movement requires a revolutionary leadership. A party that can offer such a leadership will, therefore, not prejudice the unity of the movement by its appearance; on the contrary, it will strengthen the movement and make for a solid united anti-imperialist front.

Supported by popular agitation and mass demonstrations outside, the opposition or demands of the Swarajists inside the Councils will assume powerful appearance. The demands themselves can be dictated by the popular movement. Only resolutions will not do. Strikes, demonstrations and eventually insurrections will have to be organized. If the government is sure that the rejection of even the most moderate demand of the Swarajists will not provoke any indignation outside, it will pay scant attention to their constitutional demands. On the other hand, if the Swarajists are sure that their demands will be backed up by the people, not by resolutions of the educated few, but by militant action of the masses, they will be vigorous in their demands. Thus a working alliance will be established between the two parties with their own programmes and methods of fight. Between the two, the national struggle as a whole will be pushed forward, and eventually the point will be reached where the front ranks will be occupied by revolutionaries.

In this way the Councils can be utilized in the battle for Swaraj. It remains to be seen if the no-changers will be able to rise up to the situation and assume the leadership of the party of revolutionary nationalism—a party which is bound to appear in the political arena before long.

A Capitalist Remedy*

The remark of Sir George Lloyd made in a speech before he retired, that he was not amazed at the poverty of India but at her growing prosperity and wealth, has naturally caused indignation in the nationalist circle. The statement of the retiring Governor was correct and incorrect at the same time. It was correct if he took the merchants, manufacturers and financiers, particularly of the province he administered, for India. He evidently did so, and therefore he was right in holding the view he expressed. But judged from the point of view of the Indian people at large, the assertion of Sir George was indeed misleading. A representative and defender of the capitalist system as he is, he naturally approached the matter from the capitalist point of view, and his conclusion is certainly correct in view of the principles of capitalist economics. Our nationalists also hold that enrichment of the native capitalists will mean increase of national wealth. So they cannot logically dispute the assertion of Sir George, because although it is true that imperialist monopoly has prevented the free economic development of India, it cannot be challenged that during the last quarter of a century, the capital accumulated in the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie has grown considerably, producing a proportionately increased income therefrom. Of course, Indian capitalism is not satisfied, and would like to have much more; nor can it be disputed that industrially India is very backward, and there is very great room for capitalist development. But the fact remains that in the light of the accepted theory of bourgeois economics—that accumulation of wealth by the capitalist class signifies prosperity of the entire nation—India of today may be poorer than in the days of her mythical riches, but is certainly more prosperous than 25 years ago. This statement can be easily substantiated by quoting a few figures about the number of factories, amount of capital invested in the joint-stock companies, production of manufactured articles etc. But we need not enter into details here.

Nevertheless, it cannot be gainsaid that the poverty of the Indian people is appalling. Enrichment of the small capitalist class does not reflect the economic condition of the country. But the remedies proposed by the nationalists are purely capitalist remedies. Granted their efficacy, they will only make for the prosperity of the capitalist class: the malady eating into the vitals of the people at large will be little combated. Boycott of British goods is the remedy suggested to remove the poverty of India. Of course, boycott is but a means to the end, which is to foment the development of national industries. The benefits of placing the modern means of production within the reach of Indian society are self-evident. If there is anybody disputing them, they are our orthodox nationalists. But it is one thing to say that introduction of machinery is a necessary step forward in the process of social evolution, and it is quite another thing to preach that every factory built in the country with native capital and consequently bringing profit into the pocket of the Indian capitalists is a sign of national prosperity. Those holding this view of national economics automatically corroborate the assertion of Sir George Lloyd. Looked at from this point of view, India has relatively grown richer since the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Still, curiously enough, this is the economics of nationalism.

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* *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*, Vol. IV, Nos. 3 and 4, 15 January and 1 February 1924. Signed article by M.N. Roy. SNR

It can be argued and with reason, that industrialization of the country will improve the economic status of the entire people. Indeed it will. A section of the people will find employment. Industrial wages are usually higher than agricultural wages. Industries capable of supplying all the manufactured goods needed by India will provide employment to millions of workers. This will mean a comparative economic betterment for these people; but absolutely their position will remain the same. They will get higher wages: the prices on the other hand will go correspondingly up. The net result, however, will be a rise in the standard of living, which in itself is a big gain. But this indirect benefit, of relative value for the working class, will accrue from the industrialization of the country, no matter whether it is done with native capital or foreign capital. This question concerns the Indian bourgeoisie, who will receive not wages, but profit. Therefore they are of the opinion that national industry should be built with national capital. But it is immaterial to those whose stake in the so-called national industry is the wages earned in return for labour power.

The object of boycott being to foment the growth of industry with Native capital, it cannot be held up as the remedy for the poverty of the people. On the contrary, if carried to any considerable extent, it will impose an additional economic burden on the people in the shape of higher prices. It is another thing if boycott is suggested as a purely political weapon; but it can be used as a political weapon on account of its inherent economic nature, which will determine its eventual success or failure. Therefore, boycott, be it suggested as a political or economic weapon, must be considered in the light of its essential, namely, economic character.

Recently speaking in Bombay, Mr V. J. Patel ridiculed the statement of the retiring Governor. He quoted the over-worked figures to prove the poverty of India, and suggested the boycott of British Empire goods as the remedy for it. As said above, it is a purely capitalist remedy. Boycott, if successful, will be immediately beneficial for the native industrialists, but will harm those who are called upon to carry it through in the name of national welfare. In plain language, the boycott resolution proposes to saddle the common people with an additional economic burden in order to help industrial capital. It is certainly not a 'human duty' as Mr Patel chose to call the boycott. Its political potentiality has been tested before and found to be lacking, owing to the fact that the economic condition of the majority of the Indian people renders a successful boycott impossible. Its economic efficacy is also open to doubt, because it is a questionable proposition whether stable industry can be fomented overnight by such artificial means. The industrial depression indicated by the collapse of banks and newly formed companies immediately after the boycott movement of 1905–7 and of 1920–1 should be remembered. Then the boycott always forces the prices of indigenous commodities up (experience in India as well as in other countries amply verifies it); this taxes the slender means of the Indian buyer; and consequently the consumption falls. Boycott thus defeats its own end.

Nevertheless, our nationalists stick to the programme of boycott tenaciously. They suggest boycott as the all-curing remedy. For instance, Mr Patel declared that the poverty of the Indian people could be cured by boycott of British Empire goods. He demanded that foreign capital should cease to exploit India. It is all right, but he obviously suggests that foreign capital should be replaced by native capital. He cited figures to show that the poverty of India was due to the enormous sum exacted by British capital in the form of profit and interest. But will the native capital, that will take the place of British capital, forego all profit and interest? It will also exact the same amount; otherwise why should it begrudge British capital? So the reason for poverty will remain, even after the last pound of British capital is thrown out of India. Profits and interests do not fall from heaven. They are part of the wealth produced by human labour. The toiling masses of India are so poor, because they are deprived of a large portion of what they produce by their labour. Mr Patel himself quoted figures to prove this exploitation. In so far as Indian capital will not forego profit and interest, the Indian workers will continue to be deprived of a large portion of their production. So the cause of their poverty will remain intact. Mr Patel and those belonging to his school of economics will argue: 'But the wealth today taken out of country in the shape of profit and interest, will remain in the country, when it will accrue not to British capital but to Indian capital'. True. But who will own it? Who will be benefited by it? The capitalist class. Here we again come to the same point: capitalist economics takes the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a small class for an indication of national prosperity. Those who subscribe to this view of national economics cannot logically dispute the assertion of Sir George Lloyd.

The national economists have still more arguments to back up their case. The profits made by native capital will be re-invested in the country, building new industries and thereby providing more employment to the working class. The same thing holds good in the case of British capital also. The profits and interest therefrom are converted into new capital and re-invested. Had it not been the case, 30 miles of railways built in 1857 would not be increased to nearly 40 thousand miles today. A large part of the capital invested in British-owned concerns in India is not imported from England, but accumulated by depriving the Indian toiling class of the full value of the produce of their labour. This is, however, the basis of capitalism. Capital, either British or Indian, is not dropped from heaven. It is created out of the wealth accumulated by depriving labour of its full recompense. To a wage-earner, it is absolutely immaterial who owns the industries, so long as the ownership remains capitalist.

The nationalists demonstrate tirelessly how the Indian people are bled by exploitation of British capital, but they fail to show how it will be different when native capital comes to power. They advocate the boycott of British goods, because it will help the growth of native industry, but are indifferent to the fact that this capitalist remedy will not cure the poverty of the people. Let us take the report of the Boycott Sub-committee of the Congress as a concrete example. Working according to its instruction, the Sub-committee has picked out 32 articles whose boycott should be at once undertaken, in addition to cotton fabrics which, of course, is the main target. The articles chosen for immediate boycott are those which are manufactured in India sufficiently so that Indian capitalists can avail themselves fully of the opportunity created by the boycott. But it is interesting to notice that the other side of the case is altogether ignored. Many of these articles are necessities. A little rise in their price will hurt the poor consumer. A number of the chosen items are imported more from other countries than from the British Empire. In selecting these articles it is hoped that it will be comparatively easy to boycott the import from British sources. But it is ignored that the shortness of supply caused by the expected exclusion of British goods will at once force the prices of the rest up. Another remarkable thing is the exclusion from the boycott list of machineries and parts thereof, which represent nearly 30 per cent of the total imports and come mostly from Britain. The boycott is for the benefit of native capitalism; so it should not touch the things needed by industries. A ban should be put upon necessities of life, so that the burden falls upon the people who should make sacrifice, in order that the rich can get richer.

Boycott is thus a purely capitalist remedy. If carried through fully, which is impossible in the present economic status of India, it will help the growth of Indian capitalism; but it is sheer misrepresentation of economic facts to suggest it as a remedy for the poverty of the common people.

The Release of Mr Gandhi*

All on a sudden the rulers of India seem to have recovered their sanity. Recently they have been acting with such wisdom as will remove the least possibility of any danger to the Empire. After having demonstrated by words and deeds that they are determined to rule with an iron hand, they feel that they can afford to be generous and sportsmanlike; and they know very well how these qualities go straight to the heart of India's 'politically-minded' sons, irrespective of the superficial divergence of political views. Experienced in the art of ruling, they have not failed to measure up to the situation that faces them. They do not take the vaporings of the middle class politicians—whether of the Congress or of the Council Party—at their face value. The desideratum of the whole affair is a 'change of heart'. What the Indian bourgeoisie want is only the chance of a heart to heart talk with the British rulers. The latter's regained sanity asks: why not give them this chance? They, after all, do not seem to be so dangerous as we mistakenly thought them to be. A little show of generosity will put them in an extremely reasonable frame of mind; and we will come out of this uncomfortable situation practically unscathed. This is the gist of the present policy of the British Indian government. The Labour government at home exactly falls in line with this policy.

The government has been in no haste in arriving at this decision. It has carefully examined the ground. It has proceeded very cautiously. It has never failed to rattle the sword whenever such an act was warranted. At first the revolutionary magnitude of the Non-cooperation Movement terrified it. It was totally demoralized and acted foolishly. Even after the Non-cooperation leaders had made their hostility to revolution amply clear, the government went on overestimating the power of the movement, and lost its head. The obvious collapse of the Non-cooperation campaign taxed its feverish imagination with a new spectre. The Council-wreckers loomed on the political horizon, and did not permit the rulers to regain their lost mental balance. But all these factors were either temporary, or unreal or chimerical; therefore ultimately the government did regain its balance.

The nervousness over the explosive possibilities of the Non-cooperation Movement was overcome when practically all the popular leaders, including the Mahatma, could be clapped into jail one after another without causing any revolutionary outbreak. This rather unexpected discovery encouraged the rulers and they ruthlessly vindicated law and order. What was left of the Non-cooperation Movement was crushed easily.

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* *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*, Vol. IV, No. 6, 1 March 1924 Editorial. SNR

A new apprehension arose with the appearance of the Council-wreckers. The government was once more at its wit's end, though not half as much as a couple of years before. But it did incline to take the original threats of the Council-wreckers at their face value. Jingling of the mailed fist was again to be heard when there was absolutely no reason for it. Or, perhaps this method was used to reduce the 'rebels' to sweet reasonableness. The electoral success of the Swarajists staggered the government. But this time the illusion endured a still shorter time. No sooner could the government see the new heroes from close quarters—within the four walls of the Council chambers—than it understood its mistake, and got over its nervousness. Lytton's interview with Das was no less illuminating to the government than Gandhi's visit to Reading. In both cases, the country was told that the leader had rejected the offer of the bureaucracy and demanded unconditional surrender. But on both occasions, the rulers drew an altogether different moral; the weakness of the movement was revealed to them. The demand was the same in both cases—'a change of heart'. The crafty rulers laughed in their sleeves and went their way. But the way in 1924 does not necessarily have to be the same as in 1922. At that time it was still a mass movement that had to be dealt with. One cannot sit and argue with a whole nation, specially when that nation happens to be in a rather nasty mood. But today the situation has changed. Now it is not the masses, but a small class, which has broken off all disreputable connection with the unwashed and undisciplined millions, that has to be dealt with. It is a comparatively easy task which calls, not for wholesale terrorism, but sweet reasonableness backed up by firm determination to concede only the least. Imperialism will now 'change its heart', because our leaders have gone through that process already with amazing rapidity. When the 'demand' is Provincial Autonomy or something still more modest, when the forces behind this demand are the reasonable educated classes committed to constitutionalism, and when the people have been happily led into demoralization and inactivity by the *mantra* of the 'constructive programme', the government can afford to regard the situation with calmness and say condescendingly: 'well, now it is different, let us hear what we can do for you.'

Such is the condition of the Nationalist Movement today; and the dignified generosity of the government resulting therefrom is expressed in the first act of releasing Mr Gandhi. Law and order are duly vindicated; now the victor can be magnanimous. The bankrupt Congress will certainly dispute with the Councilwallahs the credit of having Mahatmaji released. One will declare that suffering and non-violence have vanquished the evils. The others will claim that they have won the first round in their close fight with the government. But the fact remains, and this fact is very important to be noted, that neither the doctrine of the one nor the speeches and resolutions of the other secured the release of Gandhi. He was not freed a day earlier than the government desired. The Mahatma is released, not by the action of his followers, but the grace of the government. The latter has regained its sanity, and has understood that it is not necessary to keep Gandhi longer in jail. He will be a very valuable asset in the coming game of 'change of heart'; while in jail he would continue giving a handle to the bankrupt agitators.

Whatever it might be, Mr Gandhi is out of jail. It will be interesting to observe what effect this fact will have upon the situation. We have no illusion on this score. The government made it quite sure that the situation was well in hand before any definite action was taken. So there will be no spectacular change in the situation as a result of the release of Mr Gandhi. Only some more illusions will go. The orthodox Non-cooperators fondly clung to the belief that the Congress was killed, the entire Nationalist Movement brought to the present plight by the sins of the dissenters. They consoled themselves that had Mahatmaji been in our midst no such sacrilegious deviation would be allowed and the movement would go on united from one victory to another. Fanaticism does not permit them to see the reality. They would not admit for anything on earth that it was Mahatmaji himself who sounded the death-knell of Non-cooperation by forcing upon his reluctant followers the so-called Constructive Programme, which has since become the article of faith of the orthodox sect.

Leaving aside the impossibility of its completion, the Constructive Programme could be justified only as means to an end. Mass Civil Disobedience is the last stage of Non-cooperation. The Constructive Programme was laid down as the means which would prepare the country for this last action. The Constructive Programme and Civil Disobedience have so far been the stock-in-trade of the orthodox Gandhites. Now, the first act of the Mahatma on his release has been to set his face against Civil Disobedience. In his letter to Mohamed Ali he declares the Constructive Programme to be the *thing in itself*. He says that what is needed is the fulfillment of the Bardoli Resolution. The rest will then take care of itself. Civil Disobedience will not be necessary. With one single breath, the Mahatma thus blows up the beautiful castle built so laboriously during all these years of storm and stress. It must be a bitter dose for his followers to swallow if there is anything but ignorance and sycophancy left in them.

There is another apprehension lest the Mahatma will issue an edict calling for the boycott of Councils and the Swaraj Party will fall to pieces. Nothing of the kind will happen. Whatever might have been the channel of communion—telepathy or Devidas' intermediary—the attitude of Mohamed Ali at Delhi was undoubtedly inspired by the Master. So the policy of negotiation and compromise duly received the benediction of the Mahatma. In fact, the Swarajist Programme is not a negation of political Gandhism: on the contrary, it is its logical culmination. We have shown this on many occasions in these columns.

It is not a curious coincidence that the Round Table conference suggested in the Gandhi-Reading interview, the Scheme of Mrs Besant and the 'National Demand' of the Swarajists happen to be essentially identical. It only shows that the aims and aspirations of the self-same class were expressed through various agencies, which apparently are so divergent. What is wanted is always the same, namely, a heart to heart talk, in which should be determined by mutual consent the terms under which the Indian bourgeoisie will be ready to cooperate with the British rulers. The reasonable attitude of the nationalist leaders today enables the government to concede to this demand without losing power and prestige. In such a conference Gandhiji will be of incalculable value, because his presence will obviate any possible cry that the people are not given a voice in the decision of the Nation's fate. Mahatma Gandhi will represent the people in such a Conference and in the name of the people will give his benediction to any settlement arrived at. The government has not released Mr Gandhi just for fun. It is generous when it pays to be generous; and the British rulers know their man like a book, much better than his followers. None will appreciate this act of generosity more than the Mahatmaji; because he must live up to his name, be the Christ of the twentieth century who has come to teach Christianity to the Christians.

As realists and materialists we say that what is good today may not be good tomorrow—what is revolutionary in a certain period of history becomes positively reactionary in another epoch. There is no such thing as absolute goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness. The necessities of the moment determine the character of men and things. There was a time when Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi embodied the spirit of rebellious India. He was then the man, the hero of the moment. In that particular period of history he rendered incomparable service to the Indian movement; but he failed to keep abreast of the rushing tide. His leadership soon became a handicap to the movement. Had he been kept in jail, this character of his would not become evident to the average admirer. The fact that the movement has outgrown the Mahatmaji, who had once been its idol and the best available leader, would not be clear unless he is seen in action. The sanity of the British rulers has happily made this possible. The release of Mr Gandhi will be a landmark in the history of the Indian national struggle, in that it will make for the growth of realism in the revolutionary ranks.[*]

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[*] Gandhi was prematurely released on 5 February on grounds of ill-health. The Khilafat movement had already disintegrated with the deposition of the Caliph; the Non-cooperation Movement was also dead. An agreement was reached during 1924 to 'lift all boycotts' and to authorize the Swaraj Party 'to work in the central and provincial legislatures on behalf of the Congress'.

After the election results were complete Chitta Ranjan Das (1870–1925) was offered by Lord Lytton, then Governor of Bengal, 'the ministerial portfolios of the Transferred Departments'. But Das refused the offer and 'worked successfully to wreck dyarchy in Bengal'.

Annie Besant (1847–1933), 'a militant secularist' in her youth and a member of the Fabian Society, later President of the Theosophical Society, founder of the Home Rule League and President of the Indian National Congress (1917), vigorously opposed the Non-cooperation Movement. Between 1922 and 1924 she drafted, in collaboration with others, 'the Commonwealth of India Bill' which was presented in Parliament by George Lansbury in 1925. She also founded the National University at Adyar, and started the Women's Indian Association.

Mohamed Ali or Muhammad Ali (1878–1931) and his brother Shaukat Ali (1873–1938) were Khilafat leaders who were Gandhi's staunch allies in the Non-cooperation Movement. In 1923 Muhammad Ali was president of the Congress session at Coconada. The Ali brothers, however, turned subsequently against the Congress.

Gandhi's son Devdas Gandhi (1900–1957) joined the staff of Motilal Nehru's paper, *The Independent*, in 1921. Subsequently, he distinguished himself as editor of *The Hindustan Times*. SNR.

International Affiliation*

In the coming session of the All-India Trade Union Congress, the very important question of international affiliation will be raised. The Nationalist movement can remain content with its isolated character; in fact its very nature and philosophy does not very well permit it to have a healthy international connection. It may seek to create 'public opinion' in this or that country or it may talk of an impossible Asiatic Federation; but it is obviously against entering into any organic or political relation with a revolutionary international body. The cause of this attitude is simple; the Indian nationalist movement, as any other nationalist movement, being essentially a bourgeois movement naturally seeks the sympathy and alliance of the corresponding class in the international sphere. But in the present epoch of history the bourgeoisie of all countries, whose sympathy or support counts for anything, are decidedly imperialistic, therefore hostile to the aims and aspirations of the subject peoples. To an average nationalist, international relations means (in the absence of the possibility of diplomatic relations) the amorphous sympathy of the upper classes of other countries, or the questionable patronage of some government or other, which at a given moment happens to be in open conflict with the British. The bourgeoisie of a dependent country cannot have the coveted place in the so-called comity of nations; that is, they are not looked upon as equals by the bourgeoisie that rule the world. Therefore a nationalist movement, which is bourgeois *par excellence*, does not and cannot have organic and political international relations.

This, however, cannot be so with the Indian working class, in spite of the undeniable fact that, being the most vital part of the Indian people, the question of national freedom is its first preoccupation. The Indian working class must participate in the struggle for national liberation; indeed this historic struggle will be brought to its final victory not only by the energy and sacrifice of the working class, but under its revolutionary leadership. But the working class is not engaged in this struggle only for national independence as such. It participates and will eventually lead this movement, actuated by its class-interest. This being the case, the Indian working class is engaged in a fight which objectively transcends national boundaries and which must be fought on an international scale. Its alliance with the bourgeoisie of its own country is but temporary, while its relations with the working class of other countries is organic, being based on permanent interests.

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* *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*, Vol. IV, No. 6, 1 March 1924. Signed article by M.N. Roy. SNR

Apart from this far-reaching consideration, there are more immediate reasons why the Indian working class must have international affiliation. These reasons lie in the very vital questions of wages, hours of labour, working conditions and general welfare of the working class. Capitalism today operates on a world-wide scale. It reduces the standard of living of the entire working class by cleverly playing one section off against the other. The protection of working class interests, therefore, demands an international working class organization. Indian workers, being practically helpless victims of native and foreign capitalist exploitation, must join some such international organization. Therefore, the question of international affiliation is one of the most vital questions before the Indian working class movement. It should have been raised and decided before; but the immaturity of the movement did not permit it. But the interest of the movement does not allow any further delay.

This very important question, however, should not be decided light-heartedly. There is no use of adhering to an International body just for the sake of adhering. Before adhering to an International body, it should be examined whether it stands faithfully by the principles of internationalism; it should be investigated whether the history of that particular body proves that it has defended the interests of the working class under all circumstances or it has betrayed the working class in critical moments. Because if it is seen that even the European proletariat with its powerful organization has been betrayed, the helplessness of the weak and badly organized Indian labour will be evident.

Now it seems almost certain that the Trade Union Congress will declare for its adhesion to the International Federation of Trade Unions, commonly known as the Amsterdam International. It will do so because the suggestion to this effect has come from Mr N. M. Joshi, who has the reputation of being the oldest and sincerest labour leader of India. Mr Joshi's knowledge of the condition of Indian labour is vast, and he is somewhat acquainted with the international labour movement. It is more reason, therefore, that he should think twice before he commits the Trade Union Congress to a certain line of policy. Given the general ignorance of the intricacies of the international labour movement prevailing among the Indian labour leaders, Mr Joshi's proposition will be carried without examination or opposition. The responsibility of the move, therefore, solely rests upon him. But is it wise to determine the international affiliation of the Indian working class so light-heartedly?

An appreciation of the importance of international affiliation seems to be lacking among the leaders of the Trade Union Congress. As we understand from a bulletin issued by the Secretary, the attractiveness of the Amsterdam International consists only of the fact that on its Executive Board there is a seat reserved for an Asiatic delegate, and that affiliation will result in the occupation of that seat by an Indian. No question of programme and principle is raised. It is not at all enquired if the interests of Indian labour will be protected by this particular International. It is not considered whether the policy of that particular body has been friendly or hostile to the interests of Indian labour. It is not examined if the aims and aspirations of the Indian working class are compatible with the tradition and policy of the Amsterdam International. Besides these questions, which touch the Indian Labour Movement directly, there are greater questions of programme and principle involved—questions which should be carefully examined before affiliation, if affiliation will not be only an act of formality or of fashion. But here we may leave aside these questions and deal with those immediately concerning Indian labour.

Before adhering to it, one must know something of the constitution and policy of the Amsterdam International. Although its headquarters are in Holland, it is controlled by the British Trade Union Congress. Politically it is quided by the recently patched up Second International (renamed at Hamburg as Socialist and Labour International) which again is dominated by the British Labour Party. This fact by itself certainly does not speak against the Amsterdam International, because, looked at from the workers' point of view, there cannot be any serious quarrel between Indian and British labour. But unfortunately it is also a fact that the attitude of both the British Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party have so far been anything but friendly, not only to Indian national interest, but to the class interest of Indian labour as well. The incidents that bear out this statement are innumerable and are quite well known to Indian labour leaders, particularly Mr Joshi. There are three sets of Indian workers whose interests demand an immediate international settlement. They are the lascars, cotton mill workers and jute mill hands. The interests of the British and Indian workers engaged in these three branches of industry are so closely inter-linked that the welfare of both demands international cooperation and organization. What has been the attitude of the British Trade Union Congress, and for the matter of that, the Amsterdam International on this question? The anxiety of the leaders of British marine workers to keep the coloured man out of British ships is notorious; the attitude taken by them after the 'S. S. Egypt' incident is not yet forgotten; and H. Gosling and Havelock Wilson exercise great influence in Amsterdam. The leader of the Lancashire Textile Union, Tom Shaw, now the Labour Minister in Macdonald's Cabinet, is a stout champion of the Excise Duty on the Indian cotton industry, a duty which is not paid out of the profit of the millowners, but deducted from the wage-bill. No British labour leader has paid any attention to the inhuman exploitation of Indian workers in the Calcutta Jute mills, an exploitation which undercuts the workers of Dundee. It was Miss Margaret Bondfield, president of the General Council of British Trade Unions, who in the Washington Conference (1920) insisted that the work-time of the Asiatic children must be two hours longer than that of the West. Is it not placing inordinate faith in human sense of justice and charity to expect that Indian labour will find the much-needed international protection and cooperation from an International which stands for such violation of the first principles of proletarian unity?

There is another aspect of the case. It is political. The Indian labour movement can never disassociate itself from the struggle for national freedom unless it desires to become a hand-maid of Imperialism. Therefore, without in the least minimizing the importance of immediate economic issues, it must be admitted that the political question of national liberation ever remains the first concern of the Indian working class. This being the case, it must know what attitude the International it proposes to join takes on this all-absorbing issue. Here the Amsterdam International is put to the acid test and found woefully unsuitable to our purpose. Both the Amsterdam International and its political counterpart, the Second International, are pledged to the policy of keeping the 'backward peoples in civilizing subjugation'. They fully and unconditionally subscribe to the Versailles Treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations—the infamous instruments of Imperialism. Even a large section of the bourgeoisie have revolted against these notorious documents; but to the Amsterdam leaders they have become articles of faith. The attitude of the British Labour Government at last graphically demonstrates what Indian labour can expect from such pseudo-Internationals.

We do not propose to recommend an alternative just at this moment. What we do suggest, however, is that the question of affiliation should be extensively discussed before any decision is arrived at. Sufficient information about the international labour movement should be made available to Indian labour so that the very important step can be taken intelligently. It should be made known that besides the official Labour Bureau of Geneva and the Amsterdam Federation, there is still a third International working class organization which embraces that very numerous section of the European proletariat which is too revolutionary to conform with the policy of the Amsterdamers. It is the Red International of Labour Unions, with headquarters in Moscow and International Bureaus in Central Europe and in Britain, besides sections in practically all countries with an advanced labour movement. Large bodies of workers in Turkey, Egypt, Dutch Indies, China and Japan have declared their adhesion to it. While the policy of the Amsterdam Federation is determined by a few leaders, often in consultation with the employing class in their closed conferences, the Red International holds annual Congresses which are attended by delegates sent by the workers themselves, and it is in these Congresses that the programme and policy of the international movement are settled after a free and frank debate. Politically, the Red International frankly stands for the freedom of subject nationalities, and all its national sections are strictly bound to give every form of assistance in carrying out this policy. Industrially it has taken up the task of organizing an International Transport Workers' Union, which will include all workers irrespective of colour. The demand is equal pay for equal work. It carries on an incessant fight against not only the capitalist class, but also against the labour aristocracy which has turned the International into a farce, which stands for white supremacy even among the proletariat, and which uses all means fair and foul to prevent the proletariat from rebelling against the present system.

These few words are by way of information. The concrete suggestion we make is this. In its coming session, the Trade Union Congress should discuss the question of affiliation tentatively. No decision should be taken. An expert committee should be elected to collect materials concerning the various international organizations for the information of the Unions. The materials collected from all available sources should be given wide publicity in several vernaculars. The second thing to be done will be to send a small delegation to Europe with the purpose of attending International Congresses and conferences. In doing so, the delegation will be able to see for itself to which body the Indian Labour Movement can affiliate itself profitably. The delegation can also visit individual countries and acquire first hand knowledge of the state of affairs in the international proletarian movement. The question of affiliation will be finally settled after the efforts of the expert committee have enlightened the rank and file on the matter, with the help of material information and after the delegation has submitted its report and the report has been widely circulated. We consider our proposition to be quite careful and democratic and thus worthy of acceptance.*

* The All-India Trade Union Congress was inaugurated in Bombay in October 1920 with Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928) as President. In July 1921, the executive committee of the

AITUC nominated N. M. Joshi (1879–1955) as Workers' representative to the Geneva International Labour Conference. Active in the labour movement from the beginning, Joshi was a moderate and was opposed to both trade union and political militancy. A member of the Central Legislative Assembly for 26 years he initiated a number of labour welfare bills and measures.

The Fourth Session of the AITUC, held at Calcutta in March 1924 under C. R. Das' Presidentship, 'broke up in disorder' and neither the question of international affiliation nor any other matter could be settled there. The session took place in the shadow of the disastrous failure of the textile workers' strike in Bombay (January–March 1924) which involved 81 mills and 160,000 workers.

The International Workingmens' Association (or the First International) was founded in London in September 1864. It split at the Congress at the Hague in September 1872, and the headquarters were removed to New York which, in effect, meant its liquidation.

The Second International was established at a Congress in Paris in July 1889, but the 1914 war caused its disintegration. After the victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia they founded the Third (or Communist) International in Moscow in March 1919. In the West non-communists revived the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) in July 1919 with its headquarters in Amsterdam. Several socialist groups and parties who had dissociated from the Second International but did not wish to join the Third, formed the International Union of Socialist Parties (often called the Vienna Union or the Two-and-a-half International) in Vienna in February 1921. In May 1923 the Second International and the Vienna Union were fused into the Labour and Socialist International (ISI) at the Congress in Hamburg. But before that the communists founded the Red International of Trade Unions (RILU or the Profintern) in July 1921, at the time of the Third Congress of the Comintern. SNR

POLITICAL LETTERS

By
MANABENDRA NATH ROY

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*Pagination given here in the table of contents reproduces the pagination of the original 1924 edition. SNR

Introduction

The adjoined letters were written on various occasions during the last year and a half. Practically all the burning questions of the day are discussed in them. Some of them have already been published on separate occasions. But all of them taken together make a complete whole, which is of use for an understanding of the ideological aspect of the Indian Nationalist Movement. Although originally the letters were written to individuals, by way of polemics on different social, economic or political topics, they are by no means private correspondence. The individuals to whom they were addressed are active in one sphere or another of the great movement which is shaking the very foundation of our country. The object of these letters was in some cases to point out the mistakes of the persons to whom they were addressed, in others to criticize some particular school of socio-political thought, in others again to indicate the broad outlines of our programme and tactics. Therefore, it is clear that the contents of the letters were meant to be communicated to more than those to whom they were written. Thanks to the censorship in general, and in some cases owing to the reluctance of the recipients, the letters failed to reach as wide a circle of readers as they were meant for. It is believed that their publication in collectivity will serve a useful purpose.

These letters will once more prove the potency of a certain method of reading history: to learn from the past, to judge the present and to foresee the future. It will be seen that the criticism made in them has been generally borne out by subsequent developments. It will also be seen that the forecasts made were made with a correct perspective on the situation. It will further be noticed that nothing has happened to challenge successfully the allegations made against the political leadership and social tendencies of the Nationalist Movement.

Written in a rather light conversational style, the letters nevertheless deal with profound questions of a social, political and economic nature. This method of exposing our views will prove that Historic Materialism, Marxism and Socialism are not such theoretical monstrosities as they are deemed by many of our intellectual wiseacres who do not hesitate to pass opinions on subjects without knowing anything about them. Practically all of the letters were addressed to those Nationalists who never had much in common with the leadership of the Congress or the neo-constitutionalist Swaraj Party. These elements, who are objectively bound to tread a revolutionary path, if they seriously mean to work out their salvation, are however caught in such a labyrinth of intellectual confusion that it is almost impossible for them to cut a way out for themselves. The cause of this lamentable intellectual confusion is the reprehensible social prejudice in which they are steeped. This prejudice and the resulting confusion, taken together, prevent a clear understanding of the economic situation which determines, in the last analysis, all political tendencies. Freed from this bondage, these elements hailing from a semi-proletarianized lower middle class, can play an important role in the struggle for national liberation. But this much-needed freedom depends upon a correct perspective of history. This involves the question of a revolutionary social philosophy. In these letters, attempts have been made to expound the first principles of this philosophy in a language which cannot be suspected of theoretical pedantry.

Curiously enough, the lower middle class intellectuals, who cling to their social prejudice by virtue of a supposed intellectual superiority, sneer at theories when these happen to be advanced by others, and particularly by those not accepting the current theory of Indian Nationalism. In such case these lower middle class intellectuals become advocates of 'action', by which term, however, they themselves do not know what is meant. They exclaim: 'we do not want theory, we want action'! What is implied by this is that they do not care for any new theory. They are satisfied with their own which they do not even want or do not dare to analyse in the light of science and reason. This pathetic faithfulness to the inherited orthodox social theory leads inevitably to intellectual confusion, and the very notion of intellectual superiority of which they are so proud, precludes all possibility of any action in the broad sense of the word. Hence, it is remarkable that no new contribution to the political thought of our country has ever been made by the lower middle class, notwithstanding the fact that an overwhelming majority of the martyrs to the cause have risen out of its ranks.

This proves that material reasons have generated a store of revolutionary energy in the organism of this class. This energy, however, cannot assert itself profitably, simply because no suitable expression has been so far found for it. It is only the philosophy of Historic Materialism and the programme of Marxism, Socialism, that can show the way out. But the reactionary tendencies are so strong in the ranks of the lower middle class that to them the very names of Materialism and Marxism are abhorrent. To run away from this only light that can illuminate before them the road to salvation, they seek refuge in the ridiculous theory of Spiritual Imperialism: that Indian society is essentially spiritual, that Indian culture does not admit of sordid materialism, and that the spiritual mission of India will ultimately save humanity. To demolish these ridiculous theories is a task which is indispensably necessary for the progress of the Indian people, and even for the development of the present political struggle. On such a hollow foundation, no solid edifice of a political movement can be built. But immediately a way has to be found for mobilizing the revolutionary energy of the youthful members of the lower middle class, to be devoted to some more fruitful purpose than the vegetating campaign of *Charka and Khaddar* on the one hand, and the futile cult of bomb and revolver on the other. This can be done only by turning their idealist vision away from sentimental abstractions to the rude realities of life. Instead of frightening them away in the beginning with the names of Socialism and Materialism, it was sought to prove to them that the ideals they cherish cannot be realized by the methods they follow. In doing so, the light of Historic Materialism and the programme of Socialism were presented to them in a form not altogether unfamiliar to them. This could not be done indeed without adopting a line of criticism and without telling somewhat brutally unpalatable truths, things not very familiar in Indian political language.

A few letters casually scribbled cannot have the pretension of covering that vast theoretical field they touch upon. They were meant to be an intellectual stimulus: to awaken in the readers, if not the desire to make further study of the method outlined therein, at least the intellectual activity required to defend one's theory in the face of rational criticism. Unquestionable acceptance of doctrines and dogmas leads to intellectual stagnation, which is much worse than want of intelligence. Total lack of intelligence admits of the growth of it eventually when a favourable situation is created; but stagnation is a pitiable state. One sleeps with the smug conviction of possessing something which one does not possess in reality. The disturbance of this passive stage is a prerequisite for further growth. The stagnation sometimes becomes so confirmed that rather rude shocks are needed. Since the contents of the following letters are considered to have the merit of such a disturbing nature, it is thought desirable to publish them together.

Zurich, March 1924. *Manabendra Nath Roy*

On the Gaya Congress

Dear Comrade. . .

It was a treat to read, in your letter of Jan. 12, such a lively description of what happened at Gaya. It is true that nothing much happened, but this is no surprise to us. Without meaning to be egoists, we can say we have been predicting it for months. It is but part of the historic process—the ups and downs of a great movement. We welcome it because we know how to meet it. What more can be expected from a crowd of narrow-visioned, timid, semi-intellectual petty-bourgeois! In their hands, the Congress could not meet a better fate. To you or those like you, 'Non-violent Non-cooperation' may be a case of political wisdom or expediency, but to the stalwarts of pure Gandhism it is a fetish, and positively counter-revolutionary at that. You have only to remember the choice remarks of St. Rajagopal* in opposing the 'Independence Resolution' to understand the real character of this crowd. When we read that the defeat of this resolution was hailed with shouts of 'Gandhi Maharaj ki jai!' we can only congratulate ourselves upon having found a philosophy which enables us to untangle so easily every complicated social and historical phenomenon. Yes, once more the Empire is saved, once more the blessed Indian society is rescued from the threat of a Revolution! Victory to the name of the Mahatma and to his cult of Non-Violence! Alleluja, Amen! Dear Comrade, you can read your own interpretation into the social philosophy of Gandhism, but to a Marxist it is nothing more nor less than counter-revolutionary cant, perhaps unconscious of its own reprehensible significance. Tolstoy did much harm to the progress of the revolution in Russia and his Indian disciple will not play any other role in the Indian revolution.

The publicity given to our programme by the kindness of Reuter has precipitated a situation which the leaders of Non-cooperation have always been extremely anxious to prevent.*

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* This refers to Chakravarti Rajagopalachari. SNR

* 'A Programme for the Indian National Congress' was published in *The Advance-Guard* Vol. I, No. 5, 1 December 1922; the programme was elaborated in the pamphlet *What do We Want* (see *Selected Works of M. N. Roy*, Vol. I) It was intended to influence the Indian National Congress. On 21 December 1922, however, a summary of the programme was flashed by Reuter and widely publicized. The programme was attacked in England as a 'bolshevik plot'. and the Anglo-Indian press in India repeated the charge. *The*

The true colour of the Nationalism of the Right as well as of the Left, to say nothing of the pure Gandhite Centre, has been thoroughly exposed. I wonder if you had the opportunity of reading all the press-comments. If the Government ever succeeded in clever intrigue, this is the most successful of all. Our Nationalist leaders allowed themselves to be terrified into inactivity, and have at last been driven, however reluctantly, to define Swaraj. The Congress has forfeited all claim to any distinction from the Moderates by proving conclusively that none of its leaders, whether Orthodox Non-Cooperators or the Das-Nehru-Kelkar combination, will go any further than the Liberals. Thus the utter hypocrisy of calling the latter all sorts of names is exposed. The Congress won't have anything to do with our harmless reformist programme of advanced democratic ideas, because, forsooth, it threatens the absolute and monopoly rights of the landlords and big capitalists. And who are these grandees? Are they not that salt of the Indian earth, to protect and further whose sacred interests is the main object of the Liberal League? Our doughty leaders of Non-Cooperation are no less concerned about the rights of the upper classes, rank reactionary landlordism included, than the heroes of the Liberal League. The latter stand for 'law and order', and the followers of the cult of Non-Violence stand for nothing less—Deshbandhu Das' masterly exposition of Constitutional Law notwithstanding. Only our Non-Cooperating heroes go one step further on the road to reaction and counter-revolution—they stick to Landlordism, which has become too reactionary a commodity, even for the Liberal League. Poor Mother India, and still poorer Indian 'masses', to look for salvation from such patriots and parsons!

It has been proved at Gaya, if proof were still needed, that the National struggle can be led, neither by the reactionary petty-bourgeoisie acting through the orthodox 'No-Changers' under the divine guidance of St. Rajagopal, nor by the radical intellectuals desirous of harking back to the folds of Constitutionalism, under the guise of loyalty to the memory of Tilak. Between these two centripetal forces, Bengal's 'Sentimental Tommy' croaked. Before he could wreck the Councils, the Councils wrecked him.

What is to be done? A new party must be organized. There are good revolutionary elements in both the factions, led astray by personalities and fooled by empty phrases. They should be gathered under the banner of a new party whose social basis, however, must be workers and peasants. Therefore, its programme has to follow the

Advance-Guard and *What do We Want* were banned by the Bengal Government, and copies were confiscated. (See in the Section, selections from *One Year of Non-Cooperation*, the chapter 'The Explosion'). SNR lines of that published by us. We need not worry about the orthodox No-Changers. They are dead. The real danger is from the Right—from the 'Responsive Cooperators'. The Congress, in the hands of this element, will become more political, but will be steered even farther from revolution. The new party is indeed a very queer combination. It is a coalition of the rebels of the Right as well as the Left against the imbecility and quietism of the Centre. Owing to lack of courageous leadership, the Left Wing, that is, the objectively revolutionary elements, could not stand out clearly at Gaya. Their position was merely negative, so that no one could distinguish them from the 'Pro-Changers' of the Right—the Kelkar-Azmal-Malaviya crowd. This was the fatal mistake made at Gaya, and to repair this mistake is our task.

How can this be done? Propaganda must be made, to crystallize the ideology of the Left. And the best propaganda is through action. Mere talk about 'going back to the masses' will not take us very far. Everybody swears by the 'masses'—even St. Rajagopal. Then unfortunately, our de-classed, sentimental revolutionaries do not understand the difference between militant working-class organization and the reactionary cult of 'back to the villages!', If we start a theoretical discussion now about Panchayat and Soviet, bourgeois democracy and the Indian 'village republics', we will not get anywhere. And many will end by doing what some of our Indian Solomons have already done—to invent the stupid and meaningless term 'Communalism', as a substitute for Communism—obnoxious to the apostles of the Panchayat (the 'purest' form of democracy). No, we will have to adopt a more exhilarating, more inspiring way, the way of action. We must find a means to drive the declassed, sentimental revolutionaries out of the rut of metaphysical politics, into the 'devil-dance' of mass-action. They must be brought face to face with those 'masses' whom they talk about so glibly, till they cease to become an abstract term. Those who survive this acid test will become the standard-bearers of the Left-Wing Party which is a historic necessity, and which alone can save the national movement from its threatening reversion to Constitutionalism.

If we have a bold and clear-visioned leadership, it will be easy to begin this new campaign. We must be ready to catch every opportunity to stir the people to action. In many cases we will fail, but ultimate success will be assured if we keep resolutely on. Instances for inaugurating such mass-action are not lacking. Here in this atrocious legal massacre of Chauri Chaura we have an unparalleled opportunity, but who is there in India to seize it? The Congress is criminally indifferent. It has nothing more to say or do than to express its virtuous aversion to such an act of brutality. In their heart of hearts, our Nationalist leaders are votaries of the system of 'law and order', which perpetrates such legal crimes in the name of justice. And was it not the Congress which, under the leadership of the Mahatma, denounced these dangerous 'rowdies' at the very outset? Therefore, objectively speaking, the blood of these 172 condemned men is no less on the heads of our leaders than on that of British Imperialism.* Those who in every critical moment reveal themselves to be at one with the forces of an autocratic state in putting down the spontaneous upheavals of a suffering people, cannot be the leaders of a struggle for liberation. It is idle, therefore, to expect the Congress to take any action about the Chauri Chaura trial. But we should come forward, push these dummy leaders off their pedestals, and call upon the nation to rise in defence of these victims of Landlordism and the State. You are in a position to act. Call an emergency meeting of the Trade Union Commission and move a resolution that an appeal be issued to the labour organizations of India to demand the release of the Chauri Chaura victims. This demand should be backed by the threat of a General Strike. Call upon the Trade Union Congress on one hand, and the National Congress on the other, to endorse this appeal and to back it up. If they accept this suggestion, by one stroke of the pen (a perfectly non-violent method), you push these sluggish bodies on the road towards revolution. If they refuse, they do so at the risk of forfeiting all claim to leadership in the eyes of the masses. Agitation in favour of such a resolution should be carried on within the ranks of every labour-union in India. The self-appointed leaders—the Baptistas, Chaman Lals, the Andrews, Sens and Morenos—will oppose, at least sabotage, this move. But there again, we will find these sly political careerists in our grip, and can hold them up before the workers in their true colours as defenders of upper-class interests. The step needed to start this great mass-action is altogether within the limits of the law and of non-violence—merely a resolution of protest, backed up by an appeal to the country, against such a horrible crime as the killing of 172 men.

In the course of the agitation, many political lessons can be brought home. Enthusiasm among the workers should be awakened by explaining the genesis of the Chauri Chaura riot, and what constitutes the real 'crime' of these condemned men. The identity of working-class interests, the need for working-class organization, the necessity for union between the workers and peasants etc., will all be brought into relief. The action thus started is imbued with immense possibilities. It could develop into a fight for the freedom of speech and of assembly, as well as of the right to resort to direct action to enforce these and other demands for elementary rights. Only by the revolutionary means of mass-action can our movement be rescued from its present inanition and despondency. The new party which would be born of this action would grow strong and powerful in the same healthy atmosphere. Once a mass-action was started in India upon such an issue, we could count upon the support of the revolutionary world proletariat.

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* At Chauri Chaura bazar near Gorakhpur in U.P., the police had severely beaten non-cooperators and peasants. On 5 February 1922, the irate volunteers and peasants set fire to the local police station, and all the policemen were killed. Gandhi immediately decided to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement, and on 12 February the Congress Working Committee which met at Bardoli resolved not only to suspend the movement but also to ask peasants not to withhold rents and to assure landlords that no threat was intended to their rights and privileges. The Chauri Chaura troublemakers were disowned by the Congress, and given exemplary punishment by the government. SNR.

Our programme, condemned alike by the Nationalist and the Imperialist, makes provision for such revolutionary mass-action. Only within the limits of such a programme can Non-Cooperation ever become a live political force. But first of all, belief in the sacredness of Property and then sheer cowardice prevents the National Congress from countenancing such a programme. Just imagine how reactionary a movement is, in which very few are ready to subscribe to the programme of an Indian Republic based upon the principle of universal suffrage! Even universal suffrage is too much for our holy nationalists. On the one hand, Baptista Chacha* discovers the hand of British Die-Hards behind us, and at the other extreme, the 'Independent' dismisses our programme because there is no room for 'Love' in it! Deshbandhu Das will have no bourgeois democracy, but lacks the courage to push his thoughts to their logical conclusions. He is an apostle of the 'masses', but the idea of class-conflict stressed in our programme pains and horrifies him. He wants 'freedom for the whole nation', that damnable lie which constitutes the basis of modern Democracy. He gets entangled in such hopeless confusion and contradictions only because he is a sentimentalist and not a revolutionary. We need revolutionary leaders, who can only appear with a new party. And this new party can and will be born only in action, which is the crying need of the moment. On the one hand, the 'Pro-Changers' are busy discovering some saving grace in the Reforms, while on the other, the 'No-Changers' will end by retiring to the Himalayas. The political field will thus be swept clear for the appearance of revolutionary leaders.

15 February 1923.

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* Joseph Baptista (1864–1930) was the first President of the Indian Home Rule League and an advocate of 'responsive cooperation'. He organized the first All-India Postal strike in 1917 and founded with Lala Lajpat Rai the All-India Labour Conference in 1919. He was opposed to mass movements and agitational politics and was an admirer of the British Labour Party. In 1923 he was elected President of the All-India Labour Conference at Jharia in Bihar. SNR

II

On the Social Basis of A Revolutionary Party

Dear Comrade.

Non-cooperation as a political movement received its funeral ceremony at Gaya. From all reports, the Congress has met precisely the same fate that we have been predicting during the last twelve months. Marxism is a wonderful philosophy, is it not? It has made of history such an exact science. I wonder how long it will take before this modern revolutionary method of thinking is introduced into our movement. The forces of national revolution are today scattered in confusion. We propose to rally them in a new party. It is not that we have to manufacture a following. We need simply hoist a flag which will appeal to the imagination of those objectively revolutionary forces that were never understood by our religious Non-cooperators, nor by the rational Extremists of the Pro-Change Party. So objectively speaking, we hold that our party has a following. As Marxians, we declare: 'Had there not existed the social element to form such a party, there could be no idea of forming it'. You need not feel discouraged because you do not represent such a motley crew as the Non-cooperation Congress. You and those who think like you are the real representatives of the Indian people, and alone have the right to speak in their behalf.

We are agreed on the necessity of forming a new party. What is the first step to be taken in this direction? The adoption of a Programme of this Party. We have already published the outline of a Programme with certain important clauses with which you do not agree. You take exception to the 'abolition of Landlordism'. and to 'agitation' against the bourgeoisie. Your reasons are just those that forced Gandhi to call for the shameful retreat at Bardoli. He was faced with the problem of choosing between the financial aid of the landlords and capitalists on one hand, and the revolutionary energy of the masses on the other. The Bombay merchants and mill-owners would not pay their promised contributions to the Tilak-Swaraj Fund if the Congress supported the strikes and demonstrations of the workers. The reactionary lower middle-class was so closely tied to the apron-strings of the feudal lords of Oudh, that it would rather see the great Non-cooperation Movement degenerate into a prayer association and spinning guild than brook the revolutionary agrarian upheaval threatening the security of landlordism. Hence, the shameful betrayal by the Congress of the great mass-movement that culminated in the semi-insurrectionary outbreaks in Bombay and the United Provinces. This revolutionary action of the masses was denounced as 'Hooliganism', and banned in the name of 'Non-Violence'. But what was the social reason behind this theory on Non-Violence? Was it not the anxiety for the vested interests of the native upper class and the apprehension of losing the problematical support of the rich? By stoutly denouncing the revolt of the exploited peasantry, and reaffirming the sacred rights of the feudal lords, the Congress killed a great mass movement, but can you say that by these reprehensible tactics, the landlords of Oudh have been made any more patriotic, or better said, less loyal and reactionary? The recent controversy over the U.P. District Board Bill should have taught us a lesson.

As for the financial support of the capitalists, the way in which attempts were made to manipulate the entire Swaraj Fund for profiteering in Khaddar proves the real character of the patriotism of the merchants and manufacturers. No, my dear comrade, it is a mistake to give the interests of the upper classes the first place in the struggle for national liberation. If we sacrifice the dynamic forces of mass-action in favour of the financial support of the landlords and capitalists, we shall have to record innumerable Bardolis. It speaks very badly for our revolutionary outlook if we have not yet learned to recognize which social element is the backbone of our movement.

I do not say that we should fail to enlist the services of all possible revolutionary elements in the struggle. We must not lose our sense of proportion. The social character of the nationalist movement is bourgeois—therefore, the middle classes will play an important part in it. But owing to the abnormal development of our history (the fact of the British Conquest), the Indian bourgeoisie does not today possess the same revolutionary significance as did its prototype in Europe in the middle of the last century. Therefore, the *Indian Revolution will not be successful purely as a Bourgeois Revolution*. Our bourgeoisie is too under-developed, too weak, too timid, to lead a revolutionary struggle. They must be aided by some other social factor, more revolutionary. Therefore, the programme of our movement cannot be confined within the limits of bourgeois interests and aspirations.

Then look at the question from a historical point of view. What will the National Independence of India mean? The victory of the Indian bourgeoisie! As Marxians, we cannot but laugh at the Revivalist theory that India is a special creation of God. The triumph of the bourgeoisie means the disruption of Feudalism, because the latter is detrimental to the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, objectively speaking, the programme of National Independence sounds the death-knell to Landlordism. Why should we not have the courage to explain this programme in such simple language as will be within the understanding of the poor peasantry, and make the national struggle a vital issue to them? Are we less revolutionary than the heroes of the Liberal League? Even they are clarifying their socio-economic outlook and only look at the tussle going on within the Council of the U.P. If the Ministerial Liberals will not break away from their feudal leading-strings, they will ere long forfeit their title to lead the big bourgeoisie. The rise of the Independent Nationalist Party in Bengal is a sign of the times. Have you noticed that the programme of this new political party of the liberal bourgeoisie included the 'abolition of landlordism', and many of those 'welfare' clauses which seem to have terrified you in our Programme? It is not a Communist Programme that we have drafted. It is a simple, democratic document, adapted to our 'special circumstances'. We must dismiss the hope of securing the help of the landed aristocracy. The bourgeoisie must be with the national movement. They cannot leave it, nor can they fight alone. They must have our support. So we must enter the struggle consciously, and not as a mere appendage of the bourgeoisie. More on this question later.

8 March 1923.

III

On Trade Unionism

Dear Comrade. . .

As you have noticed, '*The Vanguard*' is a purely Indian paper devoted to the cause of Indian independence; it is the organ of that section of the Indian Movement which believes that India should be free not for the aggrandizement of native capitalists, but for the benefit of the workers and peasants of India, and that she cannot be free without the conscious and concerted action of her toiling masses. We who are forced to live in exile have been watching with great interest the steady development of this tendency in the Indian movement, even within the ranks of the Indian National Congress, which is predominantly a middle-class organization without much understanding of the socio-economic needs and conditions of the working-class. We strive to help the development of this tendency.

We know that the struggle of the working masses in India, as well as in all other lands, is essentially economic and social; the immediate concern of the exploited workers and pauperized peasantry is the amelioration of their unbearable economic condition—their ultimate goal is social emancipation from all class rule. But neither of these two objects—the immediate or the ultimate one—can be realized unless the entire Indian people can enjoy a free national existence which will enable them to enter into the healthy atmosphere of economic progress making inevitably for the social revolution. Therefore, the Indian working-class cannot be indifferent to the political struggle for national independence. It must participate actively in it as the first stage of the great social struggle in which it is involved, and which it must carry to a successful end in course of time.

On account of the abnormal condition in which India was forced to stagnate during the last hundred and fifty years, it has become impossible that our national freedom will be achieved mainly through the efforts and under the leadership of the middle-class. The interests of the bourgeoisie, including the landowning class, of contemporary India, although jeopardized, are not entirely antagonistic to those of the Imperial ruling class. The debacle of the Moderates and the imminent swing of the Congress towards the Right prove the correctness of this social theory. Imperialism of today is more under the control of Finance Capital than of the Manufacturing Interests. The colonial working-masses have been practically proletarianized by the exploitation of Imperialist Capital; therefore it is inevitable that they will be drawn more and more into the orbit of the world-wide revolt of the exploited classes. Under these circumstances, the Imperialist ruling-class will find a docile hand-maid in the colonial bourgeoisie, if the industrial and commercial aspirations of the latter are not completely suppressed. This possible alliance of the two otherwise antagonistic interests makes for the so-called 'New Era' in the subject countries—a New Era begun in India for example with the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. This New Era, expressed in the terms of an Irish 'Free State', or an 'Independent' Egypt, or a 'Dominionized' India, is calculated to break down the unity of the National Struggle of the subject peoples by buying up the loyalty and support of the propertied upper-classes. The Extremism of the lower middle-class, despite the complete pauperization of the latter, will never amount to anything unless it is reinforced by the dynamically revolutionary energy of the broad masses. Lower middle-class Extremism cured of all metaphysical abstractions, must assume the leadership of the great mass-upheaval which is the backbone of the Indian Movement. The Indian National Congress, in order to survive the imminent betrayal of the present leaders, must lead the struggle ahead under the banner, not of petty-bourgeois reactionary Pacifism but of Revolutionary Nationalism.

So, the task before the Trade Union Congress is not Reform, but Revolution. It is not conservative unionism, based upon the bankrupt theory of 'Collective Bargaining', but Revolutionary Mass Action involving the pauperized peasantry as well as the city and rural wage-earners, who must be organized and led by those who want to see Free India enter upon a period of social progress. Terrified by the spontaneous outburst of mass-energy, the middle-class extremists are ordering a retreat which has turned into a disorderly rout. It is necessary to reassure them; to show them the fountain-head of national energy; to tell them to make common cause with the working-masses, not to use them as pawns in the fight, but to recognize them as the heart and soul of it. Our cry is '*Not the masses for Revolution, but Revolution for the masses*'. Those who think that the economic and social condition of the Indian working-class can be appreciably improved before India has realized political independence, are mistaken. To lead the working-class, which is in a state of dynamic revolt, towards Reformism, is to help perpetuate the exploitation of Imperialist Capital. The Trade Union Congress, in order to be able to execute the historic task it has undertaken, must free itself from the leadership which believes in piece-meal reform. Such leadership is, consciously or unconsiously, hostile to the interests of the working-class.

To bring about this inevitable union of the two radically revolutionary forces under the banner or National Independence and Social Progress is the task undertaken by us. We believe that you are fighting for the same object. Therefore, let us work together.

20 November 1922.

IV

On Intellectuals

My dear. . . . .

It is needless to say how glad I was to receive your letter. That you found my letters at least 'interesting' is encouraging. It is but natural that the years which have passed since we were together would create some difference in our outlook on life. Therefore, the first thing necessary is for us to compare notes.

I must tell you at the very beginning that my letters and writings may have been read by you 'with as much interest as possible', but they have not been properly understood. It would be presumptuous to claim that my knowledge of India is perfect, but let me tell you that I have learned much more about our country, people and society in the last several years of my wanderings, than I ever did in those early days of romantic patriotism. It is indeed difficult to form a correct estimate of the present situation without intimate knowledge of the details, but it is also true that too much local colour often limits our vision and understanding. It is evident that you read my writings with a preconceived notion about my present convictions; otherwise, how was it possible for you to come to the conclusion that I 'want to finish in one step' what you want to do in two? Then, what I stand for is not, as you sarcastically call it, 'the beautiful argument : Down with the bourgeoisie!' Exactly on the contrary! The political philosophy advocated by us for the truly revolutionary element of our country today teaches us to demand a bourgeois democratic republic. But this blessed bourgeoisie of yours, on whom you appear to believe the salvation of our country depends, is too afraid, too hesitating, to follow a revolutionary channel. Therefore, it is necessary to invoke, to call into action, other forces which will push these middle-class heroes onward in the fight, and make it impossible for them to shirk revolutionary responsibilities, as they did at Bardoli and innumerable times before and after. I fail to understand why you should consider this tactics as directed towards manufacturing a Communist Paradise overnight, in that mediaeval land of ours.

Let me tell you that you cannot put more stress than I do on the first necessity of our country's political independence. I suppose this is news to you, because somehow or other you have got the notion that I have extricated myself from one romanticism only to plunge headlong into another. Only a hopeless romanticist could preach a

Communist Revolution for a country in which 80 per cent of the population is engaged in primitive agriculture. No my friend, you may think that I cannot appreciate your difficulties in patching up the differences between the Hindus and Mussulmans (of the 'thinking portion of our people'), but do not imagine that I have followed blindly in the foot-prints of our venerable Indian revolutionaries outside India, who maintain a sublime ignorance of the fundamental principles of revolution while living in the midst of a world thrown into a revolutionary maelstrom.

It seems that you have a special dislike to my habit of sending literature, nor do you approve of my 'flooding the country with a new ideal'. Well, I suppose you have your reasons for this. We are agreed that the salvation of our country will be achieved by the people of the country, but don't you think that in this mission, we may stand in need of some intellectual stimulus from outside? I may not know what particular groups of the 'thinking portion of our people' are up to, but occasionally I have a chance of glimpsing the average intellectual level and psychological intricacies of this class. There are a lot of students coming from all parts of India to study in the various European countries. Many of them have taken an active part in the Non-cooperation Movement, and have distinguished themselves for patriotism, devotion and self-sacrifice; but I do not hesitate to say that if I had to depend on these youthful representatives of your 'thinking portion' of our population for any reliable information about present conditions in India, my ignorance of the matter would be even greater than you deem it to be. I have never seen such intellectual bankruptcy and political confusion as is manifested by them. Some time ago I attended a meeting of the students' club here. A newly-arrived young man, said to have been very actively connected with the Non-cooperation Movement, was asked to speak on 'The Present Situation in India'. It was quite natural for me to expect to learn something from him about those 'perspectives' which you say I stand in need of. Well, after listening to a long rambling discourse of an hour or more, from which one could not pick out even such generalities as are easily available from newspapers, my unconscious impression was expressed by another student from England, who demanded when the speaker sat down: 'What *is* the situation in India?' The debate that followed was even worse for its shallowness, if anything could be worse than the principal speech.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, there happended to be present in the meeting one of the much-maligned Moderates, Sir ...., who spoke something which was worthwhile listening to, even if one could not in the least agree with him. There was a man with a clear idea of what he wanted. But this much cannot be said of most of our middle-class semi-intellectuals making such a mess of our movement, and who according to you, are God's Chosen People in our otherwise accursed land. And I must tell you that it was not only the youthful students against whose mediocrity and muddle-headedness, the clearsightedness of the representative of our upper bourgeoisie shone so brightly; the ranks of the students were reinforced by several nationalist celebrities and intellectual beacon-lights who have been trying to create public opinion abroad in favour of India for the past decade or so.

The moral of this tale is that one should not be so touchy on the subject of learning from others. How can I maintain organic connection with home unless those at home are given to understand my point of view on the outstanding questions of the day? And these heaps of unwelcome literature are the only means by which a really organic connection can be maintained. But if you think that the simple fact of my being abroad deprives me of the status of working for and being of the people by whom you say propaganda should be made, then I must tell you that you are mistaken. Do you think it reasonable to try to deprive me of the right to bring within the reach of those working inside the country the education and experience that I have received outside? That wouldn't be fair, would it?

10 November 1922.

V

On Economic Determinism

My dear . . .

First let me dispel some of your misconceptions about my political views and methods of procedure. The political freedom of the nation is our first objective; all our efforts should be concentrated on that. So much is clear, is it not? But to formulate a problem is far from solving it. We want national freedom. Good. But how are we going to get it? Is it necessary still to point out that neither the upper-class pragmatic politicians nor the middle-class sentimentalists are capable of winning single-handed, the battle of Swaraj? Both of these elements have demonstrated, not only their inability, but their unwillingness to go all the way towards the winning of that Freedom whose attainment is the first and indispensable step for the future progress of our people. In order to understand fully the reason for this betrayal by those whose patriotism is estimated so highly by you, one must have access to those very ideas whose importation into India you are so much against. We need a thorough knowledge of the history of human development, of the laws of economic determinism and of the achievements in the realm of social science if we are to understand what is going on in India, if we are to have that perspective that you speak of. Only then may we know why the upper and middle-classes cannot be depended upon for the national liberation of the people. India is not the only country where the battle for national emancipation has been fought. There are many instances in history, and the upper and middle-classes have played the self-same role as they are doing now in India. This leads us to the gradual awakening of the masses, a phenomenon rather casually mentioned by you.

If you are thinking seriously of developing the social consciousness of the masses, if you believe that the bourgeoisie cannot come to power without the active participation of the illiterate and propertyless majority of our people, then you should not dismiss the discontent of the workers and peasants as 'simply economic'. No community is ever involved in any political movement unless urged on by economic motives. The patriotism of the 'thinking portion' of our population originates in the clearly-defined consciousness which this class has of its own economic needs. If you want the masses to take an active part in the political movement, you will have to go down into the economics of their lives, find out their basic necessities, and arouse in them the consciousness of these necessities and how to go about winning them in the political struggle.

Why do the so-called 'thinking' elements of our people take a more active part in the political movement than the 'common' people? It is not because this class is specially created by God to monopolize the political destinies of the nation, but because as a class, *it is more conscious of its own economic interests*. And why? Not because of any natural superiority, but because they have more access to education. Some want industrial development, which will increase the amount of their profits; others want the doors to the higher government positions thrown open to them; still others want such a system of education as will enable them to earn more wages, etc. etc. *Politics is based upon economic interests and necessities*. Consequently, the political movement in which we want the masses of our people to take active part must take into consideration the economic desires and necessities of the latter. That is all I have to say. If a party will be organized in India upon this principle, with an economic programme translated into political activities, backed up by direct action of the masses, there will be no further need to bother you with unwelcome heaps of literature.

A few concrete points. You seem to be very much concerned with the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. This is the logical reaction of our old exclusively Hindu Nationalism, which was simply Pan-Hinduism when carried to its extreme conclusion, forming the antithesis of the aggressive Pan-Islamism. Now permit me to point out to you that so long as you will endeavour to rear the structure of this much-needed Hindu-Muslim unity upon the thin surface of the 'thinking portion' of our people exclusively, you may achieve mutual cordiality, but real unity will remain an unsolved problem. Here again, we must go down to the roots of things. It is upon the dynamics and not the statics of the question that we must base our calculations. The preachings and exhortations of well-meaning patriots have their subjective significance, but the main problem can be solved only by development of objective forces. The unity of the various communities inhabiting India should not be regarded as a mere political exigency. This unity will be achieved only by a social readjustment taking place as a result of the growth of new economic forces. The vertical divisions of our society can be eliminated only by the intensification of the horizontal division. That is to say, the divisions of caste, creed and religion will be replaced by *class-cleavage*, which divides society as a whole into two great, hostile camps—that of the propertied exploiter and that of the expropriated and exploited proletariat. Such being the case, Hindu-Muslim and every other communal unity can and will be realized only through the gradual process of development of class-demarcation. There is no other way. You may hate it; you may try by all means to prevent it; but it will be in vain, since the natural and inevitable development of social forces cannot be set at nought by our desires. If you are courageous enough to get a firm grip on the economic foundations of our movement, the question of communal unity will not worry you so much, because then you will see how the pressure of economic forces is breaking down the ancient communal and religious prejudices and traditions. A landlord is first of all a landlord, and a Hindu or Mussulman or anything else after that. He does not take any less rent from a tenant who is his co-religionist than from one who is not. The same holds true of employers of labour. Have you ever seen a Muslim or Hindu or Parsi employer paying a higher scale of wages to his brothers in the faith? These are general laws of economics that hold good everywhere. One can take them *a priori* for granted, because they have been proved and are proved true wherever tested. One dare not say that they are applicable to some countries and inapplicable to others. We cannot seek to escape from the working of these economic laws by trying to believe that India is a special creation of Providence. Our communal unity will be realized through the economic development of the country, just as communal unity has been realized everywhere else. Sentimental propaganda is useless. Your 'thinking portion of the people' will, on the contrary, try to preserve our communal animosities, since by this way they can keep their hold on the situation. No, my dear friend, we must determine our method of work, not according to the convenience and capability of our handful of intellectual aristocrats, but according to the economic interests of the overwhelming majority of our people. Just so long as we delude ourselves and others on the subject of superiority as measured by a university degree, just so long will we live in our heaven of intellectual isolation, happy perhaps, but condemned forever to our chains of slavery.

10 November 1922.

VI

On Rallying the Masses

My dear Comrade . . . .

How presumptuous it is of those who have been directly or indirectly responsible for the exploitation of the masses to think that they will be the judge of the latter's future activities. 'The masses must be disciplined and trained before they are allowed to march forward'. Who is going to do this, pray? The intellectual elite, I suppose, who are so anxious to have the 'controlling power in their hand before the flaring up of the spark'. In other words, you want to reserve the right to denounce the hungry, exploited workers as 'criminal hooligans', 'rowdies' etc. whenever, impelled by revolutionary fury, they go farther than you want them to go. You want to determine what is good and what is bad for the masses on the pretext of preserving the safety of the community by avoiding the class-struggle, which you call 'internecine war'. But class-struggle is not the curse of India alone; it is the essential character of civilized society, and all Indian nationalists, with the exception of the reactionary orthodox Non-Cooperators, want to introduce all the blessings of civilization in our society, excepting only this one. But in setting their feet on this path, they must accept the unavoidable consequences that must inevitably follow. Our labourers and peasants are not special beings; by 'waking up the man in them', they will behave exactly like their class in every other land, under the stimulation of capitalist exploitation. What do you want to wake them up for? In order to travel further and faster on the road of progress. But how can they progress unless their grave social and economic disabilities are removed? And how is it possible to remove the economic disabilities without injuring the vested interests that profit thereby? In other words, if you sincerely desire the progress of the toiling masses, you cannot avoid a struggle with those who live by exploiting the labour of these toilers. This is the crux of the whole problem we have to solve. There is no way out of the triangular fight which is going on now, all the time. By shutting our eyes, we cannot make it non-existent.

You complain of the apathy of the masses, but how can you expect to dissipate this apathy unless you work on their primary instincts of food, shelter and clothing? Big talk about 'National Independence', 'Democracy', 'Majority Rule', 'Constitutional Government' etc. are beyond the understanding of the common people, who will however respond to the call of those who lead them towards the redress of their economic grievances. If you refuse to do that on the plea of wishing to preserve unity of action, you will simply defeat your own ends by such tactics. How are you going to lead the 'unwilling and unintelligent' masses to a 'direct fight against their bondage', without doing the very thing that alone can do away with their deplorable unwillingness and unintelligence? It is necessary to formulate the programme of our fight in such terms as will appeal to the ignorant and illiterate but suffering and blindly rebellious workers and peasants of India. Before seeking to illuminate the man in the field and the factory on such intellectual abstractions as the spiritual character of Swaraj, you should try to make him understand the necessity of organizing for militant action against government and employers, to secure higher wages, shorter working-hours, lower rents, better living conditions, etc. You can lead them to struggle for the latter much more easily than for the former. The 'Time Spirit', which you are anxious to utilize, can best be utilized in this connection.

Look around you and see what the masses of the Indian people want today, and let me tell you, they are not so unwilling and apathetic as you seem to think. It is only among them that any fighting spirit is to be found. Who has occupied the centre of our movement for the past three years? You may think it to be a handful of idealistic students, temporarily swayed by enthusiasm, but the fact is quite otherwise. The real battles for the liberation of our country are being fought in the villages, and in the workingmen's quarters of the great industrial centres. The peasantry of the United Provinces, the Punjab, Bengal and Madras, and the workers in all our great industries are the real power behind the movement. Those who, overestimating their own importance as intellectuals, overlook those revolutionary forces, miss the whole significance of what is taking place in India today. Our National Independence will be won by the efforts of the Indian workers and peasants. The days are gone when the middle-classes possessed any revolutionary significance. To rally the masses in battle-array is our fundamental task. I know better than anyone else that this must be done by those inside the country. All we pretend to do is to be of some help to those who are bearing the actual brunt of the fight. As soon as we see such help is superfluous, all outside interference will cease.

10 November 1922.

VII

On Non-Violence and the Masses

My dear Comrade. . . .

I cannot pass over the question of Non-violence without making a few remarks. It is an important question, so even at the risk of taxing your patience, I persist in a mutual understanding of it. First of all, you are wrong in classifying us among those romantic revolutionaries who preach violence without having the slightest notion of the gravity involved in the question. We are not enamoured with the idea of violence as an idea. We are not militarists. But we are realists. That is all. We have never preached the use of indiscriminate violence. What we have done, still do and will always do is to oppose the cult of Non-violence, which is a dangerous cult, and must be exposed in its true sinister significance. You need not remind us that there cannot be an armed revolution in a country in which the people are completely disarmed. Everyone who does not have the illusion that the Motherland can be freed by bombs and pistols understands this hopeless plight of the country and appreciates the gravity of the situation. But there is a great difference between *not preaching violence* and preaching non-violence with a vengeance. If the idea behind the latter is to keep clear of the Penal Code, then the whole thing becomes miserably static. You cannot conform the Programme of a political party to the vagaries of the Penal Code. This has never been done anywhere in the world. And it will not be otherwise in India.

For example, shall the new party have a clear political programme? 'Labour Swaraj' is not any more comprehensible than the Mahatma's Swaraj, which was a 'mental state'. Every political party in India must define its attitude vis-a-vis Imperialism. We have to declare what the political character of this 'Labour Swaraj' will be. Will it be Dominion Status, or does it require separation from all Imperial connection? These are not sentimental questions. Hard facts of economics are involved in them. 'Labour Swaraj' cannot be won, the 'economic relief of the masses' cannot be secured, so long as the political life of India is not freed from Imperialist domination, which protects the monopoly of British capital. So if we are sincere in our profession of 'Labour Swaraj', we will be forced to demand a political status, the fight over which will mock at all our silly talk about Non-violence. Let me remind you again that we do not preach violence out of any love for it. We are not more bloodthirsty than Maharaj Buddha, or the Mahatmaji. But we are realists enough to see that the economic condition of the masses cannot be in any way improved unless, first of all, the monopoly of Imperialist capital is broken. What does this lead to? It means that a party of Workers and Peasants must necessarily fight for complete national freedom and the establishment of a Republic. As soon as a party commits itself to this first principle of politics, it logically launches itself on a career which will inevitably bring it into conflict with the Penal Code and to frequent encounters with the wily custodians thereof. Thus, the simple use of the term 'non-violence' cannot save us from the clutches of the I.P.C. unless this magic term eventually damns our whole programme and makes of us despicable hypocrites.

There is another aspect of the question. To define clearly that our political programme calls for the complete separation from all Imperial connection and the establishment of a national republican government does not by any means lead to the committing of futile acts of terrorism, or even to an immediate armed revolt. It is quite a constitutional position which can be taken without the least violation of the tactics of Non-violence. In Great Britain, one can freely give vent to this political principle, and the 'Independence Party' of Hazrat Mohani* has taken up the same position, under the protection of the constitutional safeguards of bourgeois democracy. Further, where do you find any preaching of violence in our Action Programme? Our tactics can be summarized in the phrase—'Mass-action'. No party of workers and peasants can be built without subscribing to these tactics. We do not preach insurrection, nor do we incite to bloodshed, so we are innocent as far as legal technicalities are concerned. But Imperialism does not follow such a sterile statical course. Even the poor Mahatma could not keep out of jail, although he made a veritable fetish of Non-violence, and sacrificed a great revolutionary movement on the altar of his own idiosyncrasies, which, socially speaking, are of a very sinister kind. It is not legal or technical violence that the ruling-class is apprehensive about. Such outgrowths can be dealt with rather easily. The suppression of the terrorist societies of Bengal and the Punjab and of the attempted insurrection in the beginning of the war are examples. The government dreads more than anything else the least signs of social violence, manifested through any political movement of the masses. Therefore, any party which will reflect the needs, desires, and spirit of the masses, cannot be considered peaceful in so far as the ruling class is concerned. You cannot fool the Government by shouting from the housetops the refrain: 'We are a Party of Non-violent Revolutionaries'. As soon as a party is formed with the object and determination to conquer freedom for the toiling masses, the wrath of the government, as well as of our own propertied classes, will be invoked. The mere use of the phrase 'Non-violence' cannot avert this eventuality.

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* Maulana Hazrat or Hazrat Mohani, alias Fazl-ul-Hasan (1883–1950), son of Azhar Husain, was a poet, journalist and militant nationalist. In 1908 he was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment on the charge of sedition. He edited a literary political periodical *Urdu-e-Muellah*, was interned during the first world war, participated actively in the Khilafat and Satyagraha movements, and at the Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress he tried in vain to get the Congress to define Swaraj as complete independence. Despite Gandhi's strong opposition, 'Mohani's resolution got 25 per cent vote in the Congress Subjects Committee'. For his outspoken speeches which advocated 'national independence, by violent or non-violent means, whichever is expedient', he was again sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment. Roy wrote to him and tried to enlist his support in building up a left wing political leadership in India. Mohani was Chairman of the Reception Committee of 'the First Indian Communist Conference' held at Kanpur in December 1925. He left the Communist movement in 1927 but continued to be active in politics and in the trade union movement. SNR

My suggestion is to drop the term Non-violence from our programme, but to be careful that no attempt at premature action is made; on the other hand, we shall not preach violence as such. We shall simply state our political demands, economic programme and social ideals, and formulate in clear language the method of fight by which we propose to realize this programme, that is, by the widespread and militant use of direct action by the working masses.

I cannot share your pessimism about the spirit of the masses. The events of the last several years, and those which are taking place in these days of depression, do not permit me to realize that it will take one or two generations before we can rouse the masses to organize. The fault is not with the masses, but with the so-called leaders. Then, if it is true that the masses are as apathetic as you picture, why talk of a party of the workers and peasants? We must sacrifice a bit of our cherished subjectivism before we can take a healthy view of the situation. You will excuse me if I point out some flaws in your generally admirable spirit. Unconsciously, by not approaching the problem from quite the right angle, you are already limiting the scope of the party. You would give the first place to the 'relief of economic conditions'. Here you undertake something impossible. How can you relieve the economic condition of the masses without first removing *the causes* of this economic condition? Our programme, no doubt, calls for the socio-economic freedom of the producing classes. But to say that we must first of all work for a generation to improve the economic condition of the workers, is putting the cart before the horse. Not the goal itself, but *the striving for the goal* must precede its actual attainment. Economic and social emancipation can only follow upon a complete change in the present political order. It is a mistake to imagine that the toiling masses will organize themselves and will take part in the political movement only when, after a generation or two, their economic condition is relieved. This is the theory of Reformism, as exemplified in the economic organization of the British working-class, whose participation in politics is a comparatively recent affair. By narrowing the primary aim of our party to the economic relief of the masses, you necessarily limit the scope of activity to reformist Trade Unionism and rural cooperative movements. This originally is not what you aim at. Our task which demands the organization of a working-class party altogether free from upper-class meddling is to organize and lead the toiling masses in the fight which will conquer, step by step, the freedom of their class and eventually of the whole society. Therefore, let us clarify our views by such a formulation of the question:

'Our object is the economic freedom of the producing classes; this ultimate goal will be attained after a long and bitter struggle; therefore, our primary task is to organize the masses and lead them in the struggle for economic freedom.'

Looked at from this point of view, the whole scheme of organization, tactics, plan of action etc. assumes a changed aspect. Yes, we must fight, struggle, be ready for defeats and disappointments, but once we have consciously set our feet on the right road, with a clear vision of the task ahead, nothing can daunt us and all causes for pessimism disappear.

10 April 1923.

VIII

On Students and the National Struggle

My dear. . . .

While emphasizing our disagreement with the theory that the intellectuals are the salt of the earth, and that their holy mission is to 'uplift the downtrodden', we do not overlook the role that the radical intellectuals play in every revolutionary movement. Therefore, we do not depreciate the necessity of making our ideas known among that section of the students of India who represent the radical tendency of the young intellectuals. Such propaganda is all the more necessary in our country, because of the fact that a considerable section of our intelligentsia is hopelessly bound up with the socio-religious reaction. Under the influence of such deplorable leadership, the minds of our youths are cramped by unhealthy ideas. A determined struggle has to be waged in order to liberate these youthful minds from the clutches of reaction, masquerading as great intellectual lights especially produced in India. The reactionary mental outlook of the average Indian student becomes palpable when he comes to a foreign country. For example, the students' association in Germany is a dead organization. The leaders stoutly refuse to allow their charges to have any political food, while the rank and file members are sublimely ignorant of everything taking place in the world round about them, although their ignorance is by no means greater than that of their leaders. If in an environment where comparatively more freedom is enjoyed such a mental lethargy is to be noticed, it is no wonder if things are still worse in India. Therefore it is that any work undertaken by the students among themselves to come in contact with the world liberation movement is of the very greatest importance.

There is no use in following the beaten track, which has proved so disastrous in all the advanced countries; neither will it do to recoil within the shell of our ancient Hindu culture. The students of India must learn the lessons of history. It is highly dangerous to idealize the student-life of Europe and America. The universities of all these countries are the worst strongholds of reaction, and the students who socially belong to the undermined stratum of the bourgeoisie, are found today actively allied with the blackest forces of counter-revolution. Such an example cannot be beneficial for our youths who aspire to shoulder the task of regenerating a nation. A more revolutionary inspiration is needed if the Indian student is to play a redeeming role in the drama of national revolution. Our people are today caught in the throes of a great upheaval which affects every aspect of life; therefore, an intellectual revolution is inevitable. We pride ourselves so much on India's intellectual greatness, but can we trade forever on the worm-eaten pages of the Upanishads? What was good for the society a thousand years ago cannot be clung to as the panacea for today. To do so is not a sign of intellectual greatness or freedom. It is stagnation from which the intellectual life of our nation must be saved. This great historical task rests upon the shoulders of the radical wing of our student body. Every great revolution of the past has produced its intellectual giants, but what has India so far done in this respect? Have our would-be intellectual leaders done anything more than attempt the futile task of pouring old wine into new bottles—of paraphrasing our old scriptures in an effort to adapt them to new conditions? This is no proof of intellectual greatness, but of intellectual bankruptcy. Sterility in the field of original thinking—not to mention in the field of revolutionary thought—is the outstanding characteristic of our intelligentsia. This deplorable condition must be altered before our intellectuals can lay any claim to participate in the regeneration of our society.

Such a miserable plight is certainly not due to any innate inferiority on the part of our people. It is the result of abnormal conditions produced by political subjugation, which has stunted our national growth in every direction. Therefore the termination of this subjugation is the gateway to any real improvement. But this subjugation will not be terminated by hugging the old worn-out socio-religious doctrines and dogmas as a precious heritage, but by discarding them in so far as they are a bondage to progress, and by readjusting them to the new conditions, if they can stand the test of the accumulated human knowledge whose benefit has been denied us by the intervention of Imperialism. The intellectuals of India will earn a place in history only if they can repudiate their traditional allegiance to the vested interests and become the focus for the forces of revolution. In order to play this role, our Indian youth must come in contact with the international movement of revolutionary youths, and refuse any longer to seek inspiration in the reactionary student body of the universities of Europe and America.

Our young boys and girls, the men and women of tomorrow, who are groping for a way out of the darkness of economic privation and intellectual blindness, will be surprised to learn that all over the world, hundreds of thousands of youths, all workers or the children of workers, are growing up with the vision of a new society, and are already lending their help, by active organization and propaganda, towards the destruction of the present social system of organized coercion and exploitation, exercised through the State, public education, religion, literature and philosophy, the press, the cinematograph, and all the other ramifications of bourgeois culture and civilization. It will be a historical day for India when her children will break away, not only from the chains of foreign domination, but also from that mental bondage to the worn-out dogmas of our past religious and social traditions, which our reactionary pseudo-intellectuals hand out in the garb of sweet phrases. Our Indian youth can break away from this bondage only by drinking deep at the fountain of revolutionary thought that inspires the movement of the International of Communist Youths. Many a prejudice must be overcome, many an illusion forgotten before the scions of our middle-class can accept the light shining out of the darkness of slumland, but there is no other way. If our intellectuals sincerely desire to regenerate themselves and to be of any use in the creation of a free society of the future, they will have to forsake their mistaken notions of superiority; they must abandon their conscious or unconscious subservience to the upper classes; they must come down from the proud heights of intellectual isolation; they must cease to feel themselves intellectual aristocrats; in short, they must accept the leadership of the working-class. Is Young India prepared to do so? If so, then a great and glorious future lies ahead. If not, it converts itself into an advocate of slavery, and nothing but utter degeneration lies in store. The great revolution that convulses the world today will remake the entire human society, and India will not be an exception. Neither Arabindaism nor Gandhism nor any of the other imbecile isms that cloud the vision of our Indian youth will be able to prevent it. It is the peculiar function and privilege of intellectualism to reflect the thought currents generated by the evolution of material conditions. It is not in itself creative; it can only serve as the vehicle of expression. As long, therefore, as intellectualism gives expression to something living, vigorous, young, creative, it ennobles itself thereby; but usually it prostitutes itself by serving as the champion and defender of the established order. The present established order—bourgeois society—has become threadbare wherever it exists. India is not excluded, because the social order idealized by our pseudo-intellectuals is a putrefied corpse on whose grave modern bourgeois society was reared. It does not require too clever an insight to detect the nature of the cure-all which our intellectual lights prescribe, not only for India, but for the entire human society. It is a reversion to theocracy or patriarchy, or at best Utopia. None of these social orders, real or imaginary, is a special creation of Indian genius. Every developing nation has a similar Golden Age to look back upon, whose 'ideal' state of freedom was undermined by the development of economic forces that eventually gave rise to bourgeois society, which in the course of evolution, has also become untenable. These simple lessons of human history, the ABC of Social Science, still remain unlearned by our young intellectuals.

The hypocrisy of bourgeois civilization has been thoroughly exposed. Capitalism has played out its role. A new society is in the throes of birth. All this is true; yet it does not follow that India can steal history, not go backwards at the bidding of that moribund reaction which binds the majority of our intellectual leaders hand and foot. No, this cannot be done. What can be done, however, is to hasten and in some degree modify the full effects of each successive period by an intensive study and assimilation of the accumulated experience of history. Herein lies an opportunity for our young intellectuals to justify their existence in a revolutionary epoch. To plunge into history in order to present to the struggling Indian people the entire experience gained by the human mind in the fields of social science, of politics, of philosophy, during the last hundred and fifty years, to present this treasure in synthesized form, is a great mission. Young India can and should undertake this noble task; but in order to be able to fulfil it, a revolutionary inspiration should give purpose and meaning to this historic mission. India cannot be led back to the patriarchal Golden Age; the slum-dwellers of Bombay, Calcutta and our other great centres of industry cannot be induced to return to their villages; Capitalism cannot any more be 'spiritualized' than it can be kept out of India. But what we can do is to see that the Indian people are benefited consciously by the knowledge and experience gained in other lands through blood and tears to so shape the destinies of India that she lives through in a shorter period of time that epoch which lasted two centuries in other parts of the world. Let us equip ourselves to aid in doing this.

10 May 1923.

IX

On Patriotism

My dear Friend. . . .

In speaking of the political side of our movement, I must first of all mention the present deplorable state of depression, which is shared also by you. It is indeed very encouraging to hear that even a partial knowledge of the work begun by us, that is the Communist Party, has made you think that perhaps after all, it is not necessary for every honest revolutionary to put an end to his life. I prefer the word 'revolutionary' to that of 'patriot', because although in a given historical epoch patriots possess a revolutionary significance, this does not hold true of them at all times and under every circumstance. For example: Mussolini, Poincare, the American Ku Klux Klan, the Manchurian bandit Chang Tsu Lin, Amir Amanulla of Afghanisthan, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, Srinivasa Sastri, Sir Surendra Nath Bannerji, Gandhi, Barin Ghose and yourself are all patriots; but imagine what a gulf divides these men one from the other, and what divergent ideals each of them represents! 'Patriotism', therefore, is a very misleading term, which often possesses a very sinister significance. A movement which is based only on patriotism cannot go very far in these days. Pure Indian patriotism smacks of reaction, and produces Gandhis and Arabindas, about whom you have no more illusions.

I dare say you yourself do not know quite clearly why you have lost these illusions. You are a patriot—as good a one as any among these super-patriots. You are very sincere in your patriotism, but so too are they. So there must be something wrong in the very conception of patriotism, which can lead men to pursue such contrary and often contradictory goals. Actuated by the same spirit of patriotism, one man reads the Gita, one sends missionaries to America to preach the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, one orders the whole nation to spin, one cooperates in the working of the Montagu Reforms, another throws bombs, and there are even some who drink three bottles of whiskey a day. There is absolutely no reason to doubt that all of them are equally patriotic. Every one of them loves the Motherland, serves her, worships her, glorifies her, idealizes her—almost every one of these Indians believes implicitly in the providential mission of India to spiritualize the world. Yet in spite of all this, these patriots and the philosophy they preach do not satisfy you any longer, although there was a time when you accepted their teachings as infallible. This shows that there is some fundamental difference between your patriotism and that of the leaders in whom you have lost faith. In a subsequent letter, I will deal with this philosophical aspect in more detail.

First of all, let me assure you that there is absolutely no reason to lose heart. In every great revolutionary movement, a period of depression is to be found. It is generally the turning-point. The time has come when we Indians must forget a lot of our cherished ideals, which have proved false and reactionary. We have to enter into a new stage of our struggle, with a new vision and a new determination. Those social elements, whom I prefer to call revolutionaries, instead of using the more ambiguous term patriots, instinctively feel the need for this new orientation. They are utterly dissatisfied with the old and worn-out theories handed out by leaders who have proved themselves to be false prophets in the actual struggle. To gather these revolutionary elements together into a new political party is our immediate object. This is the only way out of the present terrible state of depression that reigns in our movement today. So far, the reasons for the organization of such a revolutionary party have been put forward through the medium of our organ and other publications. As you are already aware after reading these, this new party is to be a party of the masses, of the workers and peasants, organized on the basis of their class interests. The labouring masses alone can conquer freedom for our country. But if they are to be led into the fight, it should be for their own welfare, and not for that of the upper classes.

We do not seek to propagate this idea as an ethical or humanitarian proposition. The whole question is one of social economics. The collapse of the Non-Cooperation Movement has demonstrated that the enthusiasm of the masses, once aroused, cannot be maintained for any length of time by mere sentimental effusions. This collapse has also exposed the shallowness of middle-class patriotism. Therefore, in the phase that is to come, the movement should be based upon more solid ground. It should be built upon the foundation of *material interests*—the material interests of the majority of our people, or in other words, of the working class.

Here you see the fundamental difference between spiritual patriotism and revolutionary patriotism. The former says that if the masses will not be spiritualized, let them go to the devil, and we will console ourselves with bottles of whiskey or the Upanishads; but the latter says that Nationalism is no moonshine. It is a material question. We want freedom, not to save the world, but to save ourselves. The struggle between India and Britain is not a cultural one, as Imperialism likes to preach through such lips as Lord Ronaldshay's.* It is a struggle for existence. Therefore, it is of greater and more vital interest to the labouring masses than to the upper classes. The masses bear the full brunt of imperialist exploitation. They are hungry; they suffer from epidemics; they and their children are born, live and die in the rankest poverty, ignorance and disease. But our upper classes live in comfort, even opulence, in spite of British rule. Thus, so long as the masses of our people are not rallied, the national struggle cannot be successful.

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* The reference here is to the Earl of Ronaldshay (the Marquess of Zetland), a

But the masses cannot be rallied and made to take an active and conscious part in the struggle, unless they see that the object is not to revive the Brahmanical Age of priestly exploitation, nor to aggrandize the merchant princes of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, but to promote the welfare of the vast producing class; to give land to the peasants and bread to the workers of India. The philosophy that dominated Indian nationalism until today was oblivious to this fundamental problem. Hence its collapse. And this collapse gives rise to pessimism and a corresponding sense of depression on the part of those who were the votaries of this philosophy heretofore. But a revolutionary has nothing to fear. He need not be disheartened; on the contrary, there is ground for hope, because those leaders whom he has followed until now with such blind allegiance, thinking they could do everything, today throw off their masks and declare that they will not do anything revolutionary. The debacle of such leaders really strengthens our movement, because it helps the revolutionary elements to come forward and assert themselves upon the situation.

Spiritual patriotism tried to measure itself against a revolutionary situation, and failed miserably. Our spiritual patriots wisely tell us that the world is not yet ready for their lofty teachings, and some of their followers find consolation in this idea. But there are others who cannot reconcile themselves with such sublime impotence; their revolutionary nature seeks ever new paths of activity, and as soon as the right one is indicated, they will shake off their temporary depression. It is from such elements, together with the vast discontented masses of the Indian working-class, that the material for the revolutionary party of the future will be brought together and welded into one compact and homogeneous whole—into a political party of the mas-

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Conservative member of the British Parliament, who was appointed Governor of Bengal in 1917. Widely travelled in different parts of Asia, he believed that 'the Indian outlook differed profoundly from that of the West', that 'the psychological gulf between the Bengali extremists and Englishmen was unbridgeable', and that it was the government's duty to stamp out the extremists. Among his writings which expressed these views are *The Heart of Aryavarta: a study of the Psychology of Indian Unrest*, and *Essayez*. SNR ses which will hold aloft the banner of material betterment at one and the same time and as an indispensable condition in the battle for political Swaraj.

Yours for a decent and speedy burial for our spiritual Swarajists.

12 June 1923.

X

On Organization and Programme

Dear Comrade . . . .

The work undertaken by us is of historic significance, since the appearance of a working-class party in the political field is an objective necessity. There is no gainsaying the fact that the workers and peasants of India can no longer remain an appendage of bourgeois nationalism, which is decidedly antagonistic to any movement calculated to affect in the least the present state of social relationships. The object of bourgeois nationalism is the transference of political power from British Imperialism to the native upper classes. Our nationalists of all shades of opinion are hostile to the very idea of classes and class-struggle. This hypocritical attitude is due to their desire of preventing the growth of class-consciousness among the workers and peasants. Bourgeois nationalism wants to exploit the ignorant but rebellious working-masses in the name of Freedom, which when realized, will mean the freedom of the native bourgeoisie. In order to keep this class-character of bourgeois nationalism confused, the nationalist leaders decry any movement which gives predominance to class-interest over national interest. But the experience of the last two years has proved unquestionably how those very nationalists, who preach the doctrine that India is immune from the disease of class-war, have not hesitated to sacrifice national interests for the interests of the native propertied classes. They have done this in every crisis that has overtaken the Non-Cooperation movement. Instances of such sacrifice of the national interests, of such betrayals are numerous and need not be cited here, since they are too well-known. These repeated betrayals have ruined the nationalist struggle, but have demonstrated, at the same time, the class-character of bourgeois nationalism.

When it becomes evident that the programme of bourgeois nationalism cannot include the interests of the toiling masses, the latter must enter upon the period of an independent political existence, in order to fight simultaneously for their own economic and social, as well as political, emancipation. The Indian working-class cannot be led to the anti-Imperialist struggle with the programme of bourgeois nationalism, but on the other hand, the anti-Imperialist struggle cannot be successful without the active participation of the working-class. Therefore, not only to achieve its own economic emancipation, but also to attain the immediate object of national freedom, the organization of an independent working-class party has become essential. The 'national independence' sought for by our bourgeoisie will make scarcely any provision for the economic betterment of the toiling masses, but this does not alter the fact that the burden of Imperialist exploitation falls most heavily upon the shoulders of our workers and peasants, and consequently, that the latter must first of all fight for national liberation. As a matter of fact, the Indian workers and peasants are much more interested in the struggle for national freedom than the middle-classes themselves, because for them, there remains no half-way house of Compromise with Imperialist rule, which bourgeois nationalism seeks. Thus, looked at from every angle of vision, the necessity for the working-class to play an independent political role becomes evident. The party that must be organized, the party of workers and peasants, will be the conscious vanguard of the Indian working-class in its struggle, first for national, then for complete economic and social liberation.

Now permit me to make some general observations on the subject of a Programme for such a party. The task of elaborating a theoretical programme must be reserved for some future occasion. Not only the theoretical programme of Social Revolution, but even that of National Revolution remains still to be elaborated. For the present, we must content ourselves with adopting a *Programme of Action*—a programme which will rally the working-class in the present struggle against foreign domination and prepare it, at the same time, for the future struggle. But a Programme of Action presupposes that the object to be realized by such action has already been defined. In other words, while speaking of the *immediate* interests of the workers and peasants, the larger issues should not be excluded from our programme. Such a tendency, nevertheless, is to be noticed in many of our comrades who are eager to organize the working-class into an independent political party. The first and foremost problem that every political party in India must face and solve, is the problem of national liberation. The fate of every party depends ultimately upon its ability to find a solution of this problem. The bankruptcy of the Non-Cooperation movement is due to its utter failure to find this solution. We must be careful that the same fate in somewhat different form does not overtake our party of the working-class, once it is organized. 'To secure economic relief to the producing classes', which appears to be the aim of many of our sincerest comrades, cannot be the programme of a political party which fails to declare that 'economic relief cannot be secured within the framework of Imperialist domination'. The mere formulation of such an aim obliges us to challenge the political domination of the Indian people by a foreign power.

It will not make any fundamental difference in the economic situation of the masses, if foreign domination is eventually readjusted to the demands of the native upper classes, in order to secure their services in the joint exploitation of the Indian workers and peasants. Our party, which must stand for the liberation of the producing classes from all forms of exploitation, cannot leave the question of national liberation outside its programme, because *national liberation, which means the release of all the forces of social production now held in check by Imperialism, is the first step towards our ultimate goal, which is the end of all class-domination.*

Some Comrades may argue—in fact this argument has already been advanced—that we should leave aside the question of national freedom, since it hardly concerns the working-class in its present state of consciousness, but will unnecessarily bring the wrath of the government upon the head of our party. This is a very vulgar way of looking at the situation. Firstly, if it is true that the working-class fails to show any conscious interest in the question of national liberation, then all the more necessary does it become for our party to take up the question in right earnest, in order to show the working-class how vitally it is concerned in the question. To a certain extent it is true that pure bourgeois nationalism cannot create any active and lasting enthusiasm among the masses; it is because of this failure of bourgeois nationalism to draw the masses into the struggle for national freedom, that the organization of a working-class party has become a historic necessity, as already pointed out. *The working-class will become actively interested in the national struggle, so soon as this struggle is carried on not exclusively from the bourgeois point of view, but as the first stage of the fight for socio-economic emancipation.* To show that the national struggle is really such is the immediate task of our party.

Secondly, it is idle to think that our party can escape the wrath of the government, if it is really the party we mean it to be. We cannot fight for the economic interests of the producing masses without at once threatening the power and position of those classes that thrive on unearned income, and so soon as the slightest indication of this threat is noticed, the entire forces of the State will begin to move with the object of crushing those from whom this threat comes. There is but one way of avoiding the hostility of the government; that is the way of Reformism. If the object of our party be to alleviate the sufferings of the toiling masses with the aid and sanction of the bourgeoisie, then we may expect to be left unmolested. But is it worthwhile to organize a new party with this object? There are already enough of such humanitarian and philanthropic organizations in existence. As Marxists, we know that any efforts made with such an object will be only gilding the chains of slavery. *The economic free-*

dom of the producing classes can be conquered only through a revolutionary struggle from beginning to end. This fact should be clearly and unequivocally expressed in our programme. A few ambiguous generalities will not take us very much farther than the reformist and utopian slogans of the nationalists.

The next point I wish to touch upon is the slogan of 'Labour Swaraj'. Whatever this phrase may mean, it cannot be the programme of our party. Such a slogan will inevitably lead us to elaborating schemes of Swaraj. What is meant by Labour Swaraj? How is it to be attained? How can we speak of Labour Swaraj, which means, if anything serious is meant by it, the Dictatorship of the proletariat, when the very question of Swaraj, that is, of National Independence, remains unsolved? To speak of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat presupposes the existence of a proletarian class consciously working for that dictatorship. But before the Indian working-class can take up the slogan of Dictatorship, it has to go through a period of political education which can only be gained in the struggle against Imperialism, a struggle carried on, not for the benefit and under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, but with a class-programme, based consciously on the interests of the workers and peasants, and led by a revolutionary vanguard—the Political Party of the Working-Class. Therefore, our slogan should not be the vague one of 'Labour Swaraj', which cannot be realized for a long time yet, but for *a National Democratic Government, based upon universal suffrage, with as much protection as possible for the producing classes*. This first victory gained, the working-class will be in a position to carry the revolutionary struggle farther towards the attainment of Labour Swaraj, which will then have become a realizable goal.

Upon our ability to formulate these cardinal points in our Programme, on its political side, will depend the possibility of establishing a working alliance between our Party of Workers and Peasants, and the parties of bourgeois nationalism. This alliance should be sought during the anti-imperialist struggle. What revolutionary significance the nationalist bourgeoisie possess can be brought to bear fully upon the situation *only under the pressure of a revolutionary mass-party*. This pressure will be effectively felt when the Party of Workers and Peasants makes use of every available opportunity for striking an agreement with the Indian bourgeoisie in the common struggle against Imperialism.

Our party must not only lead the working-classes in their everyday struggle for existence, but should also formulate the demands which correspond to the permanent interests of the toiling masses. Such demands will open up a new vision before the working-class, which will thus develop the will to fight.

Yours for the speedy organization of the *Workers and Peasants Party of India*—the Vanguard of the struggle for social, economic and political emancipation.

15 July 1923.

XI

On the Duty of Revolutionary Intellectuals

Dear Friends . . . .

Despite the abhorrence to all things revolutionary which the Non-Cooperation Movement displayed, your faith in its potentiality was really pathetic. I suppose the apparent powerfulness of the movement prevented you from analysing its composition and discovering its inherent weaknesses—weaknesses which, however, could not be concealed for long. You were charitable and chose to wait patiently. The philosophy behind this attitude was that of the good old days—submerge the Individual to the Cause. But before debarring oneself completely from the right of private judgement, it is necessary to know thoroughly the nature, ideals and principles that go into the making of a Cause, as well as the factors, objective and subjective, that conduce towards its attainment. You chose to sacrifice your individual criticism to the cause of Non-Cooperation, but what was this cause, after all? What did you sacrifice yourself for? When more than two years ago, I raised my voice against this hypocrisy of Non-Cooperation, and had the courage to utter convictions which though true were not agreeable, this philosophy of selflessness made you look upon me with displeasure. I am ready to grant that, not understanding its inherent defects, it was right on your part to take such an attitude of loyalty towards a movement which held out big possibilities. But even this much cannot be said now. The movement, from which you expected so much, is dead. It is not necessary for you to give me the credit of having made a correct estimate. What I do expect is that you should be realist enough to understand that nothing any longer exists to exact from you a loyalty whose most fatal consequence was complete inertness on your part. The time has come for you to take a definite stand.

The Non-Cooperation Movement is a thing of the past. The Congress is divided into more than two factions. The predominating tendency is towards the right, that is, towards resumption of the old constitutional methods which, by the way, will prove much more powerful in the next stages of our movement than the utter confusion which reigned in the latter days of Non-Cooperation. But constitutional agitation, while impelling the movement forward to a certain degree, is not what is needed for the attainment of freedom. It will merely be a step forward; that is all. The other sections of the Non-Cooperation camp are drifting like ships with broken rudders—there is no programme, no purpose, no leadership. The Government is taking advantage of the present chaos; therefore, it certainly does not behove the revolutionary elements of our movement to remain passive at this fateful juncture. They must act.

There are two ways ahead; either to join forces with the faction of Constitutional Democracy or to evolve a new leadership, in conformity with the objective needs of the country. The dissensions in the No-Change camp show that the rank and file of the Congress contains a considerable revolutionary element, which is as yet unconscious of its own significance and potentiality. This element is going through a period of disillusionment. At every step, it is being betrayed by leaders in whom its members placed such faith. Now is the most suitable moment for those conscious revolutionaries, who constitute the vanguard of the Army of Freedom, to assert themselves and to place themselves at the head of these disorganized and scattered forces. When I am asked: 'What should be done', I reply: 'There is an army without command; put yourselves at its head'. The real question is: How can this be done? What we have been doing, speaking and writing for these past two years (and which has made me incur your displeasure), is to supply an answer to this question, which, it was certain, must eventually arise.

Now to recapitulate the practical aspects of our proposed solution. There must be a new party. Not the old secret organizations without any political outlook, but an open mass organization with a socio-economic programme. You are perhaps not unaware that the organization of such a party has been started all over the country, and the government is the first to understand the significance of such a thing; therefore it comes down upon this embryonic party with the heavy hand of repression. The cry of 'Bolshevism' is raised, and the majority of the nationalists are alarmed by this cry. But the more alarmed they become, the more will the hand of the government be strengthened. If the comfortable position of Imperialism is to be threatened, a revolutionary mass party must come into being, and a mass party cannot be organized in India without a programme which places the economic needs of the workers and peasants in the forefront.

Call it Bolshevism if you choose. In that case, let me be brutally frank and tell you openly that the salvation of India lies through Bolshevism. But we need not be such sensationalists. Bolshevism is a long way off from India. We will have to go through many other 'isms' before we come to that stage. Every inch of ground in these intervening stages has also to be fought for. The experience of the past three years must have convinced those with an open mind that the nation is composed of two elements—one that can make a terrible noise but which will not fight; the other that appears to be dumb, ignorant, undisciplined, and all the rest of it, but which is ready and capable of fighting. The first has so far been holding the centre of the stage; the time has now come for the latter. Only class-interests and class-prejudice can prevent one from recognizing this outstanding feature of the national struggle today. Our de-classed intellectuals cannot have any class-interest, since they have long since been divested of any property-rights and titles; hence their revolutionary tendency. The political and economic development of the native bourgeoisie, not at the expense of, but in conjunction with Imperialism, will not solve the problem that faces the lower middle-class intellectuals—the problem of how to survive in the daily struggle for existence. There remains, however, a hereditary and lingering *class-prejudice*, on the part of these lower middle-class intellectuals, which allies them psychologically with the propertied classes, and prevents them from recognizing clearly the truth of their own status—that of *intellectual proletarians*—whose proper and only place is by the side of the expropriated masses.

However, the distance to travel from economic de-classification to psychological de-classification is a very short one. The alarm raised by the growing unemployment among our lower middle-class proves that it is not at all impossible for true revolutionaries to travel this short distance. One has only to be a little less sentimental and a little more realistic, and the journey is half accomplished. Leaving aside for a moment the question of the welfare of the toiling masses, we may ask: What benefit will accrue to the class we all belong to—the lower middle-class—if any of the existing political programmes now put forward are realized, be it the programme of the Moderates, be it of the Responsive Cooperators (now called Swarajists), or be it of the orthodox Non-Cooperators, if such an ilk still exists? Nationalism is no moonshine; there is always some material interest behind the species of nationalism put forward by the various classes into which the people are divided. You will accuse me of vulgar materialism. Well, all I ask you is: How is your programme of Cultural Nationalism going to be realized when the very brain of our tribe is being dried up by malnutrition and disease? Just think of living on thirty rupees a month, and even that princely standard is vanishing every day! Can you still expect a clerk with a family to support on thirty rupees a month, with the cost of living rising every day, to dream of the cultural nationalism of Vivekananda or of Arabinda (which is nothing but spiritual imperialism); much less, how can you expect him to fight for it? There is no such thing as 'defensive nationalism', as C. R. Das preaches. It is stupidity or sheer hypocrisy to say that our nationalism will be different from European nationalism. Nationalism is always aggressive, directly or indirectly. The history of the national development of every country proves this fact conclusively. The ultimate goal of Indian nationalism is to conquer the world—it may be by 'non-violent and peaceful means'. But is it not ridiculous to aspire to world domination, even a cultural or 'spiritual' one, when we are not capable of securing a full meal a day for ourselves and our families? The talk of 'cultural nationalism', of 'spiritual nationalism' is all camouflage. The upper and middle classes (the bourgeoisie) whose members wish to convert national freedom into freedom for themselves to exploit the rest of the nation—our propertied classes use the theories of India's 'cultural mission', 'spiritual mission' and all the rest of such tommyrot, only to fool the lower middle-class, which has every reason on earth to be revolutionary, and to place itself at the head of a mass movement aimed to secure real freedom for the majority of the Indian people.

The collapse of the Non-Cooperation Movement and the gradual but unmistakable revelation of the true colours of the Swaraj Party are putting the lower middle-class into a susceptible frame of mind. They will soon be amenable to reason. The ravings of the 'Servant' will not be able to drug them very much longer. The time has come to give them a new leadership, to point out a new way. But by themselves, the lower middle-class is utterly incapable of doing anything. Its members must either be the miserable and deluded followers of the bourgeoisie, or divesting themselves of all class-prejudice, they must throw in their lot once and for all with the workers and peasants. In the latter case, they will have the chance of playing a political role, if they are courageous.

Therefore, my proposition is that you should shake off your passive attitude and appear in the political field, not as an appendage to some worn-out faction, but as an independent force with a new vision, with a new programme. If such a step is not taken, a deplorable situation will result. Despair will drive the revolutionary middle-class intellectuals to resume the futile tactics of individual terrorism, which will be fatal, and will kill the possibility of a legal political mass party for a long time to come. Such a tendency is already being manifested in the Punjab. The sabotage of the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee ruined the Akali movement. What few consciously revolutionary leaders there were, were taken away by the government. The rank and file were thrown into confusion and despair. The result has been the rise of the Babbar Akalis—a victory of the Gadhr cult of revolutionary terrorism.* The days are gone in which insurrectionary movements prove helpful to great political struggles, whose progress is obstructed by the savage repression which immediately follows such an outbreak of premature violence. If we are not careful, there will be a recrudescence of the terrorist movement all over the country, the stamping out of which will mean an era of martial law and an end to whatever few constitutional rights we possess of press, speech and assembly. What is now needed is not individual terrorism, but the organization of a vast, all-India political party of the workers and peasants, upon a programme of economic and social emancipation broad enough to include the expropriated lower middle-class, and to draw within its folds all the truly revolutionary elements in the country, who will find in such a party not merely something corresponding to their own interests, but a scope for practical and constructive political activity as well.

About the programme, tactics and methods of the organization of such a party, I have written exhaustively. In short, we must provide some outlet for the energies of those impatient youths who have been waiting three years for the declaration of Civil Disobedience, and who have waited so long in vain. Such an outlet can be found in organization and propaganda activities—in work which will bring the masses consciously within the fold of the new movement. Such activities will awaken the class-interest of the workers, by explaining to them their economic condition and pointing the way out of it. It is necessary not only to show them the goal, but to be with them in their struggle for their everyday needs, and thus win their confidence. Gandhi shed crocodile tears for the masses; Das has talked volubly about the necessity for organizing the workers; but neither has done anything practical in this direction, nor has either of them meant to do so, in the direction which has been outlined by us. Let us do the work which they and others have left undone. We can prove ourselves different from the rest *only when we recognize the fact that our relation with the working-class is neither one of humanitarianism nor of political exigency, but that it is an organic relation of common interests. The interest of our class is irrevocably interlinked with that of the working-class.*

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* The Babbar Akalis were an extremist Sikh group which came into existence during the gurdwara reform agitation at the start of the 1920s. The members were largely recruited from the Ghadr party. Among its leaders were Havildar Major Kishen Singh Bidang and Master Mota Singh. They published a bulletin, *Babbar Akali Doaba*, tried to procure arms from different sources, for a short period controlled the Jullundur Doab and Hoshiarpur, but by the summer of 1923 most of the Babbar leaders were arrested. Six of the leaders were hanged, including Kishen Singh Bidang. Mota Singh, who had been provided with money by the Soviet government to carry on revolutionary activities, was sentenced in 1922 to transportation for five years and an aggregate of three years' rigorous imprisonment, SNR.

First of all we must be conscious of this fundamental truth and work honestly according to this conviction; then the rest will be clear. If our propaganda helps to create an understanding of the Indian situation as viewed in the light of historical materialism; if it tends to awaken the class-consciousness of the oppressed and exploited majority; if it carries conviction to the questioning minds of those Indian revolutionaries who are at present groping in the dark, and sets their feet on the only path that can lead to the real freedom of our country and people, then our work has not been in vain. We call upon all those who are honestly convinced that the road to freedom lies this way, to throw themselves into the great work of organizing a mass-party of the Indian workers and peasants upon a programme of economic and social emancipation, and under the slogan of '*Not the Masses for Revolution, but Revolution for the Masses*'.

15 August 1923.

Cawnpore Conspiracy Case

AN OPEN LETTER
To
The Rt. Hon. J. R. MacDonald

By
M. N. Roy

Published by the Indian Defence Committee
142 Camden Street: London NW

British Rule in India

Open Letter to the RIGHT HON. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD,
Prime Minister of Great Britain, London, ENGLAND

RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR,

The notorious 'Bolshevik Conspiracy Case' of Cawnpore has ended with the conviction of the four accused present before the Court to four years' rigorous imprisonment. In the absence of any interference from your government, this conviction may be taken as the reply to the letter addressed to you on 20 February (copy to the Secretary of State for India), in which the questions of the legality of working class organization and propaganda, and of an amnesty for those persons branded as 'Bolshevik Agents', were squarely put. This letter failed to elicit any direct response.*[1] The Appeal subsequently addressed to you and your Government, and to the British Labour Party and proletariat, when the first news of the Trial was received—pointing out its true nature and significance as an attack upon the rights of political organization and propaganda of the Indian working class, and requesting your intervention—met with the same fate.*[2] By permitting the Government of India to prosecute and convict a number of individuals on the charge of seditious conspiracy, because they stand accused of having made Socialist and Communist propaganda, and of desiring to organize a political party of the Indian workers and peasants, your Government has definitely aligned itself with the Imperial policy of its predecessors, and has gone one step beyond them in putting a legal ban on all future activities of a similar nature.

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* 1) See Note No. 1 at the end of the Open Letter. SNR

* 2) Prior to the publication of this 'Open Letter' as a booklet, an 'Open Letter from the Communist party of India To The Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Secretary of State for India, the Labour Government and the British Working Class' signed by M. N. Roy (21 March 1924) had been published in *Inprecor* Vol. 4 No. 22 (27 March 1924). In *Inprecor* (4.32, 5 June 1924), Roy also wrote an article 'Labour Justice' condemning the Kanpur Judgement. SNR

The Real Object of the Trial

The verdict handed down in the Cawnpore Court of Sessions goes far beyond the mere condemning of four individuals to four years' hard labour.* It serves as a precedent to declare all Socialist, Communist and working class organization and propaganda illegal and punishable as 'criminal conspiracy'. It was with this object in view that the case was undertaken, and this object has been achieved, with the connivance, if not given consent, of the British Labour Government. In spite of repeated efforts from many quarters, the latter has refused to intervene on behalf of the rights of the Indian working class, and the Under-Secretary of State for India, replying to a question from a Tory member in the House of Commons, stated that: 'The Government of India was taking all necessary measures to counteract the Communist propaganda of M. N. Roy'. Similar facts can be cited to show that your Government is directly responsible for this infamous trial and conviction. You and your colleagues must, therefore, face the British proletariat with this shameful responsibility on your shoulders, and go down in history as the founders of a new Labour Imperialism which does not scruple to crush the struggles and aspirations of the Indian workers towards full social, economic and political emancipation.

You are certainly acquainted with the details of the case. Nevertheless, let me record its most important features. According to the Act of Accusation, it is alleged: 'That there exists in Europe a revolutionary organization called the Communist International; that one of the objects of this organization is the formation of affiliated organizations in Eastern countries; that M. N. Roy is a member of the Communist International; and that he conspired with the other accused to organize a working class party in India, and so deprive the King of his sovereignty'. The evidence upon which this grotesque charge is based are letters alleged to have been written and received by the accused, advocating the organization of a political party of workers and peasants, and the published programme and other documents of the Communist Party of India, in which the establishment of a democratic republic is laid down, free from all foreign control. No overt act was alleged against any of the accused, nor could any incitement to criminal violence be shown, for terrorist activities are specifically denounced in these documents, and the means pointed out for the achievement of the goal is solely the organization of a mass party of the Indian working class upon a programme calling for its full economic, social and political emancipation. It is true that the counter-revolutionary nature of Gandhism was exposed, and the cult of non-violence criticized, but it was not proved in any way that either the alleged writer or recipients of the letters committed any act in violation of the law, nor did anything but express their opinions in a perfectly constitutional manner.

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* See Note No.2 at the end of the Open Letter. SNR

While in the lower Court, the prosecution's case hinged exclusively upon the alleged endeavour of the accused to organize a working class party affiliated with the Communist International, in the Sessions Court, the accusation was shifted to other grounds. Not Communist propaganda, but 'to conspire against the sovereignty of the King-Emperor', became the crux of the case. The reason for thus shifting the ground is obvious. The storm of indignation aroused in Great Britain by this attack upon the constitutional rights of the Indian working class led the Prosecuting Attorney to take his stand on other grounds. Yet even this unconstitutional and undemocratic charge, which served as the screen behind which to declare the organization of a political party of the Indian working class illegal, has not been proved. First, the charge of conspiracy is in itself unwarranted, not only on constitutional, but on juridical grounds as well, no overt act nor incitement to overt acts having been shown; secondly, the charge has not been proved before a properly-constituted and unprejudiced Court of Law.

A Mockery of Justice

The whole trial, like the Act of Accusation which preceded it, was a mockery of justice and of constitutional rights. Jury trial is not the rule, but the exception in India, despite the fact that British justice has prevailed there for more than a century and a half. To avert the possibility of a trial by jury, as well as to avoid the full glare of public opinion, the case was filed in an obscure District Court, and the petition of the accused to have it transferred to one of the larger centres was rejected by the Government of India. Two of the three assessors appointed by the Government to help the judge, confessed to their imperfect knowledge of English, in which language the case was conducted. The objection raised by the Defence Counsel to this fact was overruled by the Judge, who declared that a knowledge of English was not necessary! What does this mean in the language of British justice, but that the assessors were not required to understand anything, and were there merely for the purpose of finding the accused guilty!

All the witnesses, with one exception, were police officers and government hirelings, and this single exception was challenged by the Defence Counsel as a police spy! The letters and documents produced as evidence against the accused were seized in the mails by a system of free and unlimited spying on private correspondence over a period of two years, which was openly admitted on the part of the prosecution. The Chief of the Secret Service Department, who was likewise the chief witness for the prosecution, freely admitted that, though he was personally satisfied of the guilt of the accused, he could produce no evidence satisfactory to a Court of Law to support his allegations! *Yet a charge of conspiracy, based upon the alleged propagation of Socialist and Communist ideas brought against eight individuals on the sole evidence of police spies and government hirelings, has been confirmed in an Indian Law Court by the ruling of a British judge, and the accused sentenced to severe terms of imprisonment, despite the disagreement of the assessors, and the confessed inability of the prosecution to substantiate its accusations!* Such is the nature of British Justice in India, when a similar charge brought on similar evidence would have been laughed out of Court or made the subject of a Parliamentary enquiry in Britain.

Is Communism Legal in India?

Though the Act of Accusation and the whole burden of the prosecution arguments were based upon the charge that the accused, in collaboration with others, had attempted to organize a working class party having for its object to 'secure the political, social and economic liberation of the Indian people',—an attempt was made, in response to protests from England, to conceal the real nature of the case by declaring that 'it was not the intention to prosecute the accused because they held Communist ideas'. The prosecution counsel then proceeded to define his idea of Communism: 'Communism means, roughly speaking, a general sharing of everybody in everybody else's property!' Truly a classical definition of Marxism, about which apparently neither the Judge, nor the assessors, nor the counsels for the prosecution and defence, had ever heard. It was this profound ignorance of the very essence of scientific Socialism which accentuated the mockery of the proceedings, and contributed to the final gross miscarriage of justice resulting in the conviction of the four accused present before the Court. Had even an elementary study of Marxism enriched the legal arguments, it could easily have been shown that, *granted the legality of Communism (and the prosecution did grant it), the whole Act of Accusation and trial based upon it dropped to the ground, for nothing was alleged nor proven against the accused but that which* *is written in the programmes of Communist Parties everywhere—namely, the overthrow of the existing system of government and its substitution by a working class government by means of a social revolution.*

Thus, the charge of 'conspiracy', based upon the use of the terms 'revolution', 'violence' and 'force', must either be applied to Communist Parties everywhere, for all of them use these terms in describing the change from one system of government to another—or it must be dropped against persons alleged to be Communists in India. In view of the unequivocal statement of the prosecuting counsel, acting on behalf of the Government, that 'the organization of a Communist Party, in itself, is not a criminal offence'—the whole case against the accused falls to the ground, for they were accused, and convicted, on no other grounds than this. All the evidence brought against them to prove a 'conspiracy', only tended to show: (1) That the accused were either Communists or acted in collaboration with Communists; (2) That they propagated a programme written by Communists from the Communist point of view; (3) That in accordance with this programme, they advocated the organization of a political party of the Indian working class, whose object should be the attainment of full social, economic and political emancipation; and that (4) To this end, affiliation to the Communist International was advocated. So it is ridiculous to try to camouflage the real nature of the case, whose object was to stamp out the germs of a militant labour movement in India.

Is the Indian Claim to Freedom and Democracy Unconstitutional?

It soon became evident that such a prosecution of working class ideology and tactics in India, under the auspices of a Labour Government in Britain, would be too bald a violation of the fundamental rights of citizenship which ostensibly exist there. Despite the rigorous censorship on Indian news, reports of the trial began to leak out, and protests arose in Britain at this monstrous attack on the liberties of the Indian working class. It was at this stage that the prosecution deemed it wise to shift the ground of its attack, and to pretend that the accused were being tried, not as Communists and Socialists, but because of an alleged 'conspiracy' against the sovereignty of the King-Emperor. The proposed Party of Indian Workers and Peasants would be smothered in its infancy, not because it was a working class organization, but because it threatened to challenge British rule. The case for the prosecution now became: 'Certain persons, believing in

Communism, conspired together to give effect to their belief by means of criminal force'. This charge is based on the authority of Clause 1 in our programme, which calls for the 'establishment of an Indian Republic, free from all foreign control', and on the use of the terms 'force' 'violent revolution', etc., which occur in the course of the exposition of the Communist ideology. *It should be remembered that no overt act or incitement thereto could be alleged against any of the accused.* It was deemed that any possible sympathy on the part of the British proletariat would be successfully alienated, if the accused were tried, not as leaders of the Indian working class, but as enemies of the Empire. This was indeed a clever move, in view of the fact that a large majority of British workers still harbour illusions about the Empire, which so far as they are concerned, is but a gilded chain. Such a transparent stratagem could only succeed however, in a country like India, situated thousands of miles away from the militant working class movement of Europe, and where the few constitutional safeguards that exist can be brushed aside at will by the arm of an all-powerful bureaucracy. The judicious muzzling of the press kept the progress of the case shrouded in silence, so far as the outer world was concerned, and a snap judgement convicting the accused was allowed to pass without comment in the British Liberal and Labour Press, in a test case which will serve as a precedent for the future suppression of the Indian Labour movement. *Is it a criminal offence to advocate the establishment of a democratic Indian Republic, free from all foreign control, by the use of force if necessary, granted that no overt act or incitement thereto can be proved?*

The advocation of the use of force, as opposed to mere constitutional agitation for the achievement of the social revolution, which is the admitted goal of all schools of working class thought, is the chief difference that divides Socialist and Communist tactics. Yet this difference in ideology and tactics does not render Communism illegal in other parts of the British Empire. The right of free self-determination for subject peoples, and the establishment of an autonomous government, is one of the principal planks in the platform of the British Labour Party (in power to-day as the Labour Government), and of the Socialist International to which it is affiliated. Where then occurs the 'criminal conspiracy' in having openly advocated a universally acknowledged right? The British lawyer for the prosecution, acting on the authority of the Government of India, which is responsible to the Secretary of State and the Labour Cabinet, urged the conviction of the accused on the plea that 'the conspirators believed that British domination stood on the way to the economic and social emancipation of the Indian working class, and therefore proposed to destroy this domination'. So it is only depraved Communists, who in India are convicted as 'criminal conspirators', who hold that Imperialist domination is prejudicial to the welfare of subject people? A frank statement on this question from you, Right Honourable Sir, as the leader of a great proletarian party and of the Second International would be very illuminating, particularly in view of your attitude on the rights of the people of Georgia to freedom and self-determination.

Does British Labour Stand for India's Right to Freedom and Democracy?

The final argument of the prosecution resolves itself into this: 'The Vanguard of the Indian working class stands for the overthrow of British Imperialism, because the economic and social emancipation of the Indian masses require it'. Now the question arises—is this demand unconstitutional, looked at not only from the viewpoint of class-interest, but from the democratic angle of vision as well—an angle [from] which you, Right Honourable Sir, profess to judge all questions, whether Home, Imperial or Foreign. Another question which occurs as a necessary corollary to the first is whether your Government, as an essentially social democratic one, has done anything, or proposed to do anything, which can or will prove that the social and economic freedom of the Indian working class can be achieved within the framework of the British Empire?

The programme of an Indian Republic, free from foreign control, is entirely legal and constitutional, if there is any meaning at all in the loudly-proclaimed doctrines of democracy and self-determination which are so dear to your heart. Yet you and your colleagues, supposedly wedded to these lofty principles, have scarcely arrived in office when you sanction the prosecution and conviction of eight individuals who advocate the same thing for India. We expected that under a Labour Government, the Indian workers would receive protection at least insofar as the elementary questions of hours, wages and conditions of work were concerned; we expected that the Indian masses would receive freedom of economic and political organization and propaganda; that the Socialist and working class movement would be freed from the illegal disabilities under which it has been placed by the autocratic powers of the Indian government. It was in this expectation that I addressed my first letter to you, soon after you assumed office. But contrary to these expectations, and true to the notorious treachery of social patriotism (in your case, Imperialism), the persecution of the Indian working class became fiercer under the

Labour regime. Strikes have been crushed without mercy, and peaceful and unarmed strikers shot down by the rifles and machine guns of the Imperial police and soldiery, acting under orders from a Labour Government in Britain. Yet its Prime Minister remains an adherent of Fabian pacifism, and speaks eloquently of the blessings of disarmament. At the very moment when British Justice, under the aegis of a Labour Government, was condemning four youths to four years' rigorous imprisonment on the charge of 'criminal conspiracy', for having advocated the use of force in ridding the Indian people of the ravages of capitalist imperialism—at that same moment, the forces of British law and order were shooting down unarmed strikers in the town of Cawnpore, a few hundred yards distant from the scene of this judicial mockery! If to use force be a criminal offence, then the British Government of India which was 'established by force and maintained by force', is far more culpable than we! And it is you, Right Honourable Sir, and your Labour colleagues, who will one day stand at the bar of history to answer for the crime of perpetuating this reign of force!

Is British Sovereignty in India Legitimate?

We are accused of having organized a 'criminal conspiracy' against the domination of foreign capital, as embodied in British rule. Has it never occurred to our Imperial rulers, who were the Labour Party of yesterday, that you yourselves have questioned the legitimacy of British sovereignty in India? You, of all persons, require the least to be reminded in what fashion this boasted 'sovereignty' was established, and of the fact that governments which have been established by force and which are maintained by force usually end by being overthrown by force. We are accused of conspiracy for having advocated the illegal as well as legal organization of a political party of the Indian working class. If we work 'illegally', it is because we are not allowed to do so legally, despite the recent declaration of the Government prosecutors that 'the organization of a Communist Party was not, in itself, illegal'. Is it legal, we ask you, to surreptitiously open the private post of free citizens, and to seize, copy or destroy their contents? Is it 'legal' to ban the circulation of Socialist, Communist and working class literature; to set spies on the trail of Indian Communists from one country to another, after forcing them to live in exile from their native land? You speak of conspiracy! The British proletariat would have a thrilling tale to hear, if the organized conspiracy on the part of our Imperial rulers against the freedom and well-being of the three hundred millions [of] half-starved, exploited and oppressed men, women and children of the Indian Empire were fully told! You speak very much of 'Humanity', Right Honourable Sir. Where is that love of humanity manifest in your avowed intention to perpetuate the infamous domination of British Imperialism in India? When we are arraigned before a British Court of Justice on the charge of criminal conspiracy for having advocated the freedom of the Indian people by the use of force, if needful, our only answer to your legal scribes and pharisees is: 'Physician, heal thyself!'

How will You solve the 'Indian Problem?'

We repeat, and we challenge you to repudiate this statement, that the economic interests of the colonial and subject peoples require the destruction of Imperialism. India, as a colony of the British Empire, is no exception to this law. While you and your colleagues are flagrantly violating the first principles of that democracy which you uphold, and persist in your brutal persecution of the Indian working class, your Government has manifested its desire to 'solve the Indian problem', in the same manner by which Lloyd George 'solved' the Irish and Egyptian problems—by placating the native bourgeoisie! Indian capital will be permitted to combine with British capital to exploit and oppress the Indian proletariat and peasantry to an even worse degree than at present; the forces of 'law and order' will be placed at their joint disposition to shoot down Indian strikers whenever necessary. Protection is being granted to Indian industrialists in the name of 'Reforms', to win them over to the side of bureaucracy. By granting the demands of the Indian bourgeoisie, and taking into confidence the 'elected representatives of the people', it means only that the upper strata of the population, hardly two per cent, have been admitted into the Imperial partnership, to share in the exploitation of the Indian masses! This is no Labour policy; it is the politics of Liberal Imperialism! Will the condition of the Indian workers be in any way altered thereby, except for the worse; and will it not be the final means of forcing the British proletariat, already the victim of chronic unemployment, to sink to the level of coolies? These are the politics of Imperialism, which you and your colleagues of the Privy Council have pledged yourselves to preserve and perpetuate. The success of this policy will mean the intensified exploitation of the colonial masses on the one hand, and the depression of the standard of living of the home proletariat on the other.

The Real Solution

The only real solution of the fatal crisis in which civilization finds itself involved is the total destruction of Imperialism, and a change from the capitalist system of economy to a Socialist one. The rise of a militant working class party in India is one step towards this goal. By challenging the right of British capital to dominate India, under any pretext or in any disguise, the projected compromise between the British and Indian bourgeoisie will be frustrated, and Indian labour will act as the ally of British Labour in their common struggle for emancipation. This fact is clearly realized by our Imperial rulers, and therefore, their excessive nervousness over 'Bolshevik conspiracy' and 'Bolshevik propaganda'. Our programme represents the objective demands of the Indian working class, and once given the freedom of agitation and organization, we would carry the masses with us. Hence this brutal repression, which is not only a violation of the constitutional rights of the Indian people, but treason to the British proletariat as well. If the Labour Government persists in denying the Indian masses a constitutional outlet for their grievances, they will be obliged to take refuge in the only weapon which remains to them—Force, employed as an instrument of freedom, to overcome force maintained as a tool of exploitation and oppression. And who shall dare to say that the Indian people will not be justified? Not the British proletariat, in whose name you are playing the role of the watch-dog of Imperialism.

In view, therefore, of the grave significance of the situation, I call upon you, Right Honourable Sir, in the name of the Indian masses, to reconsider your policy. I repeat the demands made in my first letter. Let the Labour Government come to the assistance of the Indian working class, instead of carrying on clandestine negotiations with British and Indian capitalism. Let the monstrous judgement of Cawnpore be reversed, and the accused set at liberty. Give the same rights and protection to Indian Labour as prevail in Great Britain—recognize the rights of organization and propaganda on the political and economic fields. Lift the ban on Socialist and working class literature. Legalize the existence of trade unions, and equalize wages, hours of work and conditions of labour with those prevailing abroad. Grant a general amnesty for all political offenders, and declare the rights of the Indian people to self-determination and autonomy.

Only by such measures can the British Labour Government justify its pretensions to be a government of the working class, and be true to the principles laid down in its programme of Socialism. Will you have the courage, Right Honourable Sir, to inaugurate this new

Labour policy upon the ashes of the old? The verdict of history awaits your decision.

(Signed) Manabendra Nath Roy.

Zurich, Switzerland,
5 June 1924.

Note No. 1

Although Roy gives 20 February as the date of his first letter to Ramsay Macdonald, the original letter was in fact dated 21 February 1924. The full text of this letter is reproduced below. The letter was forwarded with a note from J. E. Ferand, Secretary, Judicial and Public Department, India Office, London, to The Secretary, Government of India, Home Department, on 6 March 1924 (Home Political F. 111), but no reply or acknowledgement was sent to Roy. SNR

The Right Hon'ble J. Ramsay Macdonald,
Prime Minister of Great Britain,
London.

(Copy to the Secretary of State for India)

Right Hon'ble Sir,

The undersigned is an Indian who believes in the right of every people to be free. Since 1905 I participated in the movement whose object is to conquer this right for the Indian nation. Consequently I had to suffer all sorts of prosecution and persecution at the hand of the British Government in India. Finally in 1915 I was obliged to leave my native land, in order to escape extreme penalties of law. Since then, I have lived in forced exile, which, however, did not render me immune from persecution. I have been persistently hunted down by the agents of the British Government who do not hesitate to bring pressure upon the authorities of other countries in contravention of the codes and usages of international law giving the right of asylum to political offenders. Nevertheless, I have gone on doing, according to my convictions, my share in the struggle for the freedom of the Indian people.

Being a socialist, I do not subscribe to the programme of Indian nationalism which bases itself simply on the rivalry and antagonism between the native and foreign capital. I hold that India should have an autonomous national government, because without it normal progress and prosperity of her people in general cannot be attained. From this point of view I make common cause with the movement of bourgeois Nationalism. But at the same time I am of the opinion that the National Government should be made really democratic by giving ample protection to the economic interests of the toiling masses. The common people, however, will have very little political right and economic protection from the National Government if they do not prepare from now to defend their class interests. This can be done only if they will participate in the Nationalist movement not as a mere adjunct of the native bourgeoisie, but as an independent social factor organized and fighting on the basis of their class interests. Our programme places the Nationalist movement, not on the basis of racial issues nor of capitalist antagonism, but on the wider basis of economic interest and social emancipation of the masses of the population.

This programme has brought on me the epithet of 'Bolshevik Agent' in addition to other previous accusations. You know how freely this epithet is used by imperialism. The paper published by us as well as anything else written by me or my comrades are branded as 'Bolshevik propaganda' and proscribed in India. The circulation, reading and possession of such literature is punishable. This literature is devoted to the propagation of a programme whose outlines are given above. I take the liberty of sending under separate cover specimens of our publications for you to judge if they contain anything more or less than ordinary nationalist and socialist programmes. Literature of similar and much more revolutionary nature is allowed to be published and circulated in Great Britain and her self-governing colonies, not to mention other independent countries. In one word, socialist literature is prohibited in India. We accepted the situation as natural hitherto; but it is also natural for us to expect that it should be changed under a socialist Government.

Now, Right Honourable Sir, as a socialist and representative of the British proletariat, you must agree that it is no crime to claim the right of self-determination for one's country nor does simple socialist propaganda become 'subversive Bolshevik propaganda' as soon as it comes to India. Indian socialist and Indian working class are entitled to have their international affiliation. There are many who are adherents of the British labour party and of the International to which you belong. There may be others who prefer other international working class organizations. It is a mere question of opinion, and today the socialist Movement of no country is free from this difference of opinion. Therefore the fact of my membership of the Communist International cannot reasonably deprive me of the right of living and working in India, when adherents of the same International are not deprived of identical rights in Great Britain.

The advent of Labour Government in Britain encourages in us the hope that the position will be changed. We expect that those working for the advance and welfare of the Indian working class will not be persecuted under Labour Regime as before.

Therefore I beg You:

1. To cause the ban to be raised from our paper, *The Vanguard*, from books and brochures written by me and others holding identical views as well as all kinds of socialist literature freely circulated in every civilized country; and 2. To give me the permission to return to India without becoming the object of persecution for alleged offences committed in the past. I should draw your attention to the fact that my political views have undergone a radical change since I left India in 1915.

What I solicit is an amnesty from the alleged charges made against me in the past. I suppose the declaration made by His Majesty the King-Emperor in 1919 concerning Indian political offenders can be applicable to me. When I return to India, I will, of course, be prepared to take the consequences of my action in the future.

I will appreciate it very much if I am given the passport to come over to England, there to discuss with the India Office the question of my return to India.

Expecting a favourable and early reply.

Zurich, Switzerland
21 February 1924.

I remain, etc.
Sd/-M. N. Roy.

N.B. My lawyer, Dr. C.A. Hitz Bey, Nationalrat, Turnerstr, 19 Zurich has been instructed to receive the reply to this communication in my behalf.

Note No.2

According to Cecil Kaye, Director of Central Intelligence, it was originally proposed to institute a conspiracy case proceedings against thirteen persons, but on the advice of the government counsel the list was reduced to the following eight: M. N. Roy, Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani, S. A. Dange, Ghulam Hussain, Nalini Gupta, M. Singaravelu and R. L. Sharma. Prosecution against Ghulam Hussain was withdrawn in view of his 'unconditional surrender' and statements; proceedings were also withdrawn against Singaravelu in consideration of his ill-health; Sharma being in Pondicherry could not be brought to trial; but although Roy's being in Germany also precluded his trial, a warrant was issued and made over to Cecil Kaye for Roy's arrest. The plan was 'to secure his arrest and despatch him to India under the Fugitive Offenders Act of 1881' should he enter UK (Home Political F. 176/1924). This warrant provided the basis for his arrest in Bombay seven years later in 1931.

In the event, the four persons tried and sentenced in the Kanpur Conspiracy Case were: Muzaffar Ahmad, Shaukat Usmani, S. A. Dange and Nalini Gupta. The main charge against them, as made in the Committal Order, was that the Comintern had decided 'to form a branch organization in India under the control and guidance of Manabendra Nath Roy, the object of which was . . . to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty of British India', and that the accused had entered into a conspiracy with Roy and were planning to form 'an association of workers and peasants or a People's Party' in order to achieve this objective. The session trial began on 22 April 1924 and on 20 May the four accused were sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment. Nalini Gupta was released owing to ill-health in July 1925, Ahmad also on medical grounds in September 1925, Dange in May 1927 and Usmani in August 1927. SNR

Two Articles by
M. N. Roy

from

The Communist International, 1924

1. The Second International and the Doctrine of Self-Determination, Vol. 8 No. 4

2. Anti-Imperialist Struggle in India, Vol. 8 No. 6

Introductory editorial note

The Communist International, organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, began publication in May 1919, that is, two months after the formal founding of the Communist International in March 1919. It had Russian, German, English and French editions. The English edition was brought out simultaneously from Petrograd and London. The edition from London stopped publication in December 1939, but twelve more monthly issues were brought out from New York under Earl Browder's editorship. Publication of the journal ceased in December 1940.

I have not seen a complete set of the original editions, but in 1968 Greenwood Reprint Corporation, New York, brought out a reprint edition in English. Greenwood undertook the task of assembling all issues of Series 1 (Nos. 1–30, 1919–24) and Series 2 (Nos. 1–25, 1924–26; Vols. 3–17, 1926–40). While it succeeded in locating all of the issues of the English language edition from May 1924 to December 1940, it could only locate 'over one half of the issues of the old Series, published between 1919 and 1924'. On the advice of Professor Witold S. Sworakowski, Stanford, the missing issues of the English edition were replaced by the equivalent issues of the German edition. This reprint edition is available in the National Library, Calcutta.

Two of Roy's articles appeared in the German edition during 1922. Two of his articles published in 1924 are reproduced here, the source being the Greenwood reprint of the English edition. SNR

The Second International and The Doctrine[*] of Self-Determination

One of the prices with which Mr. MacDonald bought the rather dubious Liberal support has been the scrapping of the doctrine of self-determination. This doctrine, invented by ex-President Wilson to justify the depredations of one group of imperialists against another group, was taken up by the moribund Second International as an article of faith. Much breath has since been wasted on this doctrine which is, for all practical purposes, nothing but a piece of bourgeois hypocrisy. In the hands of the Social-Democrats, it served the purpose of a very convenient weapon to fight the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Second International kept on talking of the right of self-determination after the Treaty of Versailles had cynically mocked at the unsuccessful prophet of the doctrine (...). But Mr MacDonald told us that he believed in the right of self-determination for all nationalities. It was, therefore, natural to infer that, although Mr MacDonald and his party did not fight against British imperialism with one-hundredth as much vigour as they fought 'Bolshevik imperialism', the peoples inhabiting India, Ireland, Egypt and the extensive regions included in the British Empire would be given the right of self-determination when the Labour Party came to office. Of course, among the Communists there has never been much illusion on this score. It was never believed that the doctrine would prove any less to be hypocritical cant in the hand of the reformist Social-Democrats than it did in the hand of the imperialist bourgeoisie. It is a bourgeois doctrine *par excellence*, and, as such, can never work out in a way which will mean ruin to bourgeois domination.

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[*] *The Communist International*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1924, pp. 123–137. Deletions are indicated with three dots (. . .). SNR

On many an occasion half-hearted resolutions were passed by the Second International expressing sympathy with the struggle of the oppressed people. But never did those resolutions mean anything more serious than an expression of righteous opinion. In short, the Second International never took the question of self-determination seriously. Its vision did not go beyond the narrow limits of the European countries. It believed in the 'civilizing mission' of European imperialism. When the carrying out of this mission brought in its train brutalities which could not be overlooked, the Second International squared its conscience by passing a resolution. But it never challenged imperialism as such. Had the resolutions passed by the Second International during the last twenty years been anything more than a collection of sweet phrases, the colonial policy of the British Labour Party in office would not be what it is. The politics of Mr MacDonald, as Prime Minister, stand condemned by the utterances of MacDonald, the Socialist. The Second International never meant to approach the question of self-determination from an angle of vision different from that of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, at the first instance that its most influential section came face to face with the problem, the hypocrisy of its position is exposed.

In some quarters, however, the professions of Mr MacDonald and his colleagues did arouse hope which has now been dashed to the ground by his action.

Mr MacDonald wrote much about India. Although nowhere in his writings is to be found anything that can be construed as a commitment to the cause of Indian independence, his professions of sympathy and friendship were so profuse that they could not fail to make him rather a popular figure in Indian Nationalist circles. Mr MacDonald visited India twice. Once as a simple Member of Parliament, in 1910, and then three years later as a member of a Royal Commission to examine the possibilities of reforming the Public Services. On both occasions he expressed himself very sympathetically towards Indian aspirations. In fact, his first visit made him so popular in India that as a sop to the popular feelings he was appointed on the Royal Commission. After his first visit he wrote a book called 'The Awakening of India', which soon incurred the displeasure of the colonial rulers, and was promptly prohibited entry into India. When Mr MacDonald became the Prime Minister, his book was still under the ban. It was a curious situation: the Prime Minister considered to be an enemy of the Empire! This curious situation appealed to the sense of humour of the Indian Nationalists; but Mr MacDonald himself chose to overlook it, obviously in the interests of the Empire.

In the newly-elected Indian Legislative Assembly it was asked if the Government was aware of the fact that a book of the Prime Minister was proscribed in India. The Government naturally was placed in a very queer position. It came out of it with the aid of some extremely lame excuse. After some days of delay the Government informed the Assembly that there was no such order on record. So, without committing itself and without establishing a precedent in favour of 'seditious literature' entering India, the Government of India avoided the duty of declaring the Prime Minister an enemy of the Empire. How disastrous would it have been otherwise! All the guarantees given by Mr MacDonald and his colleagues as to the safety of the Empire in the hands of the Labour Party would have been challenged by this single act!

The Indian Nationalists defended Mr MacDonald's right to free opinion against the attacks of his own subordinates, even after he had sent his memorable message to India on the eve of his coming to power. Mr MacDonald wrote that infamous message to insinuate himself into the good graces of the British bourgeoisie. In writing it he not only forgot all his former profession about self-determination, but voluntarily bartered away his Indian admirers. The most significant fact is that, that message, which could have been sent by any representative of British Imperialism, not excluding Lord Curzon, was not written under the 'exigencies' of office, under which the vital planks of the Labour Party in home politics have been rejected, but before Mr MacDonald became Prime Minister—even before his advent to office was a certainty. In other words, he sent that message when he was engaged in the task of forming the invisible coalition with the Liberals. The latter demanded that he must make his position as regards India clear. He must prove that there would be no weakness on this point during his regime. It was true that he had not written or said anything that could be construed as against the maintenance of the Empire. But his irresponsible talks had raised high hopes in India. These hopes should not be encouraged, particularly at the moment when the Nationalists were threatening to create a deadlock in the government by Parliamentary opposition. The imminence of a Labour Government stiffened the attitude of the Nationalists who counted in their ranks not a few personal friends and many an admirer of the would-be premier. The Liberals pointed out to Mr MacDonald that his loose talks about self-determination had been taken too seriously in India and that a halt should be called. If he was ready to sacrifice his Indian admirers, he could count upon the Liberal support. In order to prove that he had not meant anything serious in his previous talks, Mr MacDonald sent the message to India, as it were, to show that the Labour Party might talk of self-determination in leisure hours, but in the moment of action it could shake the mailed fist in the defence of the Empire just as well as any bourgeois party. Therefore, Mr MacDonald reminded his Indian friends and admirers that no tampering with imperial hegemony would be tolerated by his government. But what was after all the threatening demand of the Indian Nationalists against which Mr MacDonald roared so majestically?

It should be remembered that the general elections took place simultaneously in Great Britain and in India. According to the same laws of democracy and constitutional government, which made it possible for Mr MacDonald at the head of a minority party to form the Cabinet, the Nationalists in India ought to be entrusted with the administration of the country. In fact, they are in a better position. In the Central Legislature the newly-formed Nationalist Party (composed of the Right wing that broke away from the National Congress and the Left wing of the Liberal bourgeoisie) possesses a clear majority by virtue of which it has repeatedly defeated the Government practically on every question. But the Government sits tight in its place; and Mr MacDonald, as the head of the Empire, sanctions this flagrant autocracy, all his professions of democracy, self-determination and constitutionalism notwithstanding. These Nationalists entered the pseudo-parliamentary institutions granted by the Government of India Act of 1919, which Mr MacDonald glorified as the Magna Carta of India following in the footsteps of his bourgeois predecessors, in order to fight the autocratic government on the parliamentary ground. It was quite a constitutional position to take. We should think that such an eminently respectable and positively harmless method of political warfare would not fail to receive the approbation of Mr MacDonald. But it was not the case. It was precisely against this programme of parliamentary opposition that the anathema of Mr MacDonald was hurled. He declared that the tactics of parliamentary opposition in India was unconstitutional and even 'revolutionary', and shook his mailed fist at those who proposed to adopt these tactics, following the traditions of the British Parliament. Even Mr Gladstone did not consider Parnell a revolutionary, nor did Mr Baldwin lock Mr MacDonald up in the Tower of London when he led the Labour opposition against the Tory Government.

To appreciate properly to what an extent the Labour Government has violated all codes of democracy and constitutionalism, which are its articles of faith, it is necessary to take a retrospective glance at the political situation in India during the last decade and to have a picture of the present condition of the Nationalist Movement.

In the darkest days of the imperialist war, the British Government bought the support of the Indian bourgeoisie with the promise of a 'new spirit in imperial relations'. Had not the loyal assistance of the Indian people been assured, the extensive campaigns in the East could not have been carried on and the consequence might have been disastrous. Believing in the promise of Asquith, the Indian bourgeoisie heartily helped the British authorities to secure by force this valuable loyal assistance when it was not voluntarily given. So, although rather indirectly, the Indian people contributed plentifully towards the noble cause of the war for democracy, and as such they are entitled to a share in its spoils. But they were not even given what was promised to them. The British Government rewarded the Indian bourgeoisie with some concessions in the economic field and with a shadow of political rights granted exclusively to the upper strata of the propertied classes, namely, the big capitalists and landlords. The scheme was to drive a wedge in the ranks of the Indian bourgeoisie. The signs of a widespread popular discontent, in consequence of the intensified exploitation during the war and the high prices that followed, are already in sight. It was to be expected that the native bourgeoisie would not willingly let such a splendid opportunity go by without exploiting it to press their demand, unless some preventive measures were taken. The most advisable step to take was to split up the bourgeoisie and thus to weaken the imminent movement. This necessity gave birth to the famous Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms which were embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919. By these reforms a mockery of parliament was given to India, the franchise extending to less than two per cent of the population. A very complex system of bureaucracy was introduced in the administration. The object was to make a little room for the upper bourgeoisie and the landed aristocracy without affecting in any way British supremacy in every important matter. The new system was called dyarchy. The Provincial Governments were made partially responsible to the Legislatures with a majority of elected members; but the Central Government, in which was vested the supreme authority in every vital question, remained totally autocratic, although the Central Legislature also contained an elected majority. The partial responsibility introduced in the Provincial Governments were, however, practically nominal. The Governor rules with the help of an Executive Council composed of two or three officials and a Ministry also of two or three chosen by himself from the elected members. These ministers, however, are not removable by a vote of the Legislature. This has been lately proved to the hilt. In several provinces, the government has been defeated repeatedly by the Nationalist majority in the Legislatures; votes of censure have been passed against the ministers; but not in one single case has the government accepted the verdict of the peoples' representatives. In the Central Government, even this shadow of responsibility does not exist. This brief information about the constitution of the present Indian administration must be given here in order to indicate fully the significance of the attitude of the Labour Government. The Government of India Act of 1919 was declared by the imperialist bourgeoisie to be a landmark in the political progress of India, and it found not a few enthusiastic supporters in the Labour Party, Mr MacDonald himself being one. These very meagre reforms were conceded very grudgingly and from the beginning they have been sabotaged by all conceivable means. Now comes Mr MacDonald to tell the Indian Nationalists that they should be thankful to imperialism for this great Charter, but should not insist upon its fulfilment. This is exactly what he and his colleagues have given us to understand since they became the custodians of the Empire.

If we stop to think how moderate is the demand of the Indian bourgeoisie, it becomes clear how atrocious is the attitude of the Labour Government. The self-determination demanded by the Indian bourgeoisie is only the right to a small share in economic exploitation and political administration. In the beginning, the Reforms Act satisfied practically all sections of the Indian bourgeoisie. Had the government been less miserly in giving that beggar a dole, the Non-Co-operation movement which shook the country in the years following might possibly have been averted. But the government was mortally afraid of the brewing mass discontent which was an echo of the revolutionary tempest that swept the world in the aftermath of the Great War. Having placated the bourgeoisie, it desired to crush this discontent with an iron hand. The measures taken for this purpose meant taking away many times more than what had been given under the Reforms Act. A commission, presided over by an English judge, was set up to inquire into the causes and possibilities of the 'seditious' movement. The commission, as was expected of it, submitted a report in which it was declared that there existed in the country a widespread revolutionary agitation. The report was concluded by two projects of law which would place the entire country practically under martial law for a number of years. The agitation begun against these projected legislations soon revealed to the lower strata of the bourgeoisie the sources of a new force which hitherto had never been brought to bear upon the Nationalist movement. The constitutional agitation was readily responded to by the discontented masses, and, before the leaders had been aware of it, the movement grew too big to be contained within the narrow limits of protest meetings which passed resolutions. The industrial discontent, on the one hand, assumed the shape of a gigantic strike movement which swept the country; on the other hand, agrarian grievances were expressed through a revolutionary peasant movement which at one time came very near to a peasant revolt. The first stage culminated in the Amritsar massacre . . .

The 'reforms' granted by the Government of India Act of 1919 were very limited in their scope; they did not fully satisfy the lower strata of the Indian bourgeoisie. The latter desired something more, but by themselves were too weak to press their demand. Therefore, they reconciled themselves to the situation and gave their adhesion to the Reforms Act in the beginning. So much so that the very men like Gandhi, Nehru, Das, etc., who subsequently headed the Non-Cooperation movement and some of whom today are leading the Nationalist agitation in the Legislature, declared themselves in favour of the Reforms. They even went so far as to accept the clause which conferred upon the Viceroy the right of certification—a clause which subordinated the whole reformed constitution finally to the autocratic prerogative of the colonial pro-consul. According to this clause, the Viceroy could pass a certain measure over the head of the Legislature or reject one passed even unanimously by the parliament. The fact that even this was swallowed by the Indian bourgeoisie showed how modest was their aspiration. But the spontaneous growth of a great mass movement changed the situation. It split the bourgeoisie, one faction standing firmly by the government, the other placing itself involuntarily at the head of a gigantic revolutionary agitation.

Then followed the famous Non-Cooperation movement led by Gandhi. The history of this movement is more or less known and need not be related here; nor can it be done within the compass of this article. After a rather spectacular career that lasted for three years, the movement collapsed more owing to its own reactionary socio-economic tendencies and political contradictions than under government prosecution, which, nevertheless, was also severe. One point, however, must be made clear. It is this. Although large revolutionary elements went into the composition of the Non-Cooperation movement, its programme and the demands put forward by the leaders have never been of a revolutionary nature. For example, it never stood for separation from the Empire. On the contrary, Gandhi has always been and still is a partisan of British connection. If the revolutionary aspects of the movement became objects of government persecution, they were no less sabotaged, condemned and disowned by the leaders. In fact, the revolutionary possibilities of the Non-Cooperation campaign were ruined by the moderate character of the leaders. Now even this movement, which sacrificed itself on the altar of pacifism, so dear to Mr MacDonald, and which valiantly struggled against and ultimately killed the revolutionary tendencies in its organism, failed to win the approbation of the British Labour Party . . .

The Non-Cooperation programme was divided into three parts which corresponded to the three social elements that went into the composition of the movement. The strength of the movement was in its mass character and in the fact that for the first time in the history of the Indian Nationalist movement, the working class actively participated in it. The masses being the backbone of the movement, that part of the programme which hinged on militant mass action was the most vital part of the programme. But in spite of the mass character of the movement, its leadership was in the hands of the petty bourgeoisie reinforced by a large element of opulent intellectuals who socially and ideologically belonged to the big bourgeoisie, but strayed into the ranks of the Non-Cooperation movement, hoping that with its help they would be able to wring more concessions from imperialism. In course of time the vital part of the programme, the part calling for militant mass action, was pushed to the background and the other parts corresponding to the spirit of the two bourgeois elements came into prominence. Consequently, the whole movement was placed upon an untenable basis. The economic aspect of the programme consisted of the impossible boycott of British goods and the reactionary attempt to revive backward modes of production, while on the other hand, in the political sphere, the success of the programme depended entirely upon the will of the element that had strayed in the movement from the camp of the big bourgeoisie. The political programme was the boycott of the Legislatures set up by the Reforms Act, boycott of law courts, and boycott of schools. Of this triple boycott only the first was successful, because the first elections to the Reformed Councils took place in 1920, while the Non-Cooperation movement was pushed ahead by a tremendous upheaval of mass energy. But this boycott was the first fatal mistake of the movement. It left the field clear for the government. The Legislatures were filled with the representatives of the loyalist landlords and the big bourgeoisie. In other words, the leadership of the Nationalist movement permitted the government to sabotage the Reforms without any serious obstruction.

In course of time the Non-Cooperation movement went on losing all political importance in proportion as it severed its connections with the masses. By the end of 1922 the National Congress left the government alone and was engrossed in an internecine quarrel. The two bourgeois elements had fallen apart, once the leaven of mass energy was removed. This quarrel ended in a split, which marked the beginning of a new phase. The cry was to rectify the mistake of 1920. The petty bourgeoisie, who has stood at the head of the Non-Cooperation movement, was opposed to this new tendency, since it was sure to push them into the background and throw the big bourgeoisie again in the forefront of the Nationalist movement. But separated voluntarily from the masses, thanks to their reactionary character, they could hardly hold their own against the radical intellectuals who were much more advanced politically. So the section of the upper bourgeoisie, that had strayed into the Non-Cooperation movement, repudiated the boycott of the Legislature and did not hesitate to split the National Congress on this issue. They easily carried the day. The three social elements that went into the composition of the Non-Cooperative movement, fell asunder. The most advanced and conscious one, namely the element hailing from the upper bourgeoisie, returned to their spiritual fold. The second split, therefore, undid the previous one that took place in 1920 after the introduction of the Government of India Act and under the pressure of a great upheaval.

Five years after the inauguration of the 'new era' the Indian bourgeoisie stands today determined to make the best of the 'constitutional reforms'. And by a historical accident it has fallen upon a Labour Government to fight them. The first touch of reality put Mr MacDonald to the test and he was found to discard his profession of self-determination without much ado.

The Nationalist bourgeoisie contested the elections of 1923 with the avowed object of demanding self-government. They declared their intention of backing up this demand by all parliamentary means available under the circumstances. They threatened to obstruct the functioning of the government by creating a deadlock if their demands were not granted. For various reasons the Nationalists won more seats than they themselves expected. Though only in one province they got a clear majority, in practically all the important provinces as well in the Central Legislature, they acquired a substantial minority. The main cause of this unexpected success was that, owing to the economic development taking place in the last several years, the bourgeoisie today requires a more vigorous representation than could be provided by the Liberals who accepted the Reforms Act and stood faithfully by it when the government sabotaged it all the time and by every conceivable means. The new Nationalist Party reflected the political and economic aspirations of the bourgeoisie much more energetically than the old Moderates who proposed to gain self-government by stages. This fundamental reason aided by many circumstantial stimuli sent strong Nationalist groups in the Legislatures. Consequently, a stiff fight was to be expected in the parliamentary field. The situation was the most acute on the advent of the Labour Government. On many a previous occasion Mr MacDonald had expressed his sympathy for the demands put forth by these parliamentary nationalists. There was nothing revolutionary in their programme. What was demanded was quite within the limits of self-determination as interpreted by the Second International. It was the right of the bourgeoisie to determine how the natural resources and the manpower of the country should be exploited. But the British bourgeoisie had staked its claim prior to that of the sons of the soil. Therefore, the otherwise legitimate demand of the Indian bourgeoisie could not be admitted so easily. The fact that the would-be Prime Minister had formerly sympathized with Indian aspirations for self-government naturally encouraged the Nationalists who, therefore, were in very high spirit. The British government considered this a rather ominous sign. Mr MacDonald was evidently taken to task for this when he was angling for Liberal support. Therefore, to reassure the British bourgeoisie on the one hand, and disillusion the Indian nationalists on the other, he sent his message to India. In this message he thundered:

'No party in Great Britain will be cowed by threats of force: and if any section in India are under the delusion that this is not so, events will very sadly disappoint them.'

It was not necessary to wait for other events. The message itself was enough for the purpose of disappointing Mr MacDonald's friends and admirers in India. . . . He manufactured the bogey of the 'threats of force' to justify his position. He would argue: 'I am not against self-determination. I am against use of force'. But who on earth ever talked of force in India? In fact, none has sacrificed so much for pacifism as the Indian bourgeoisie. They killed a splendid movement for the cult of non-violence. . . .

The very fact that the Nationalists participated in the elections proved that they accepted the Government of India Act as a settled issue. Nowhere in the speeches, writings, resolutions and manifestoes of the Nationalists is to be found any challenge to the Empire. What was expressly demanded is the end of the bureaucracy, when the demand was the most extreme. Often the demand was much more moderate. There is not one leading Swarajist who has not on innumerable occasions deprecated the use of force and declared his faith in constitutional methods. The political demand of the Party, as stated in its programme, was Dominion Status. None of the party leaders is any more revolutionary than Mr MacDonald. In fact, there are a few among them who are his political disciples (except for his Socialism).

Now, what are the tactics that they proposed to adopt in order to realize this very moderate and highly constitutional demand? In one word, it is parliamentary opposition. The plan was as follows: as soon as the Councils assemble, the Nationalists would introduce a number of demands. If the government rejected these demands they would adopt the policy of consistent obstruction by voting against every government measure. In this way they would create a deadlock in the Councils and force the government to consider their demands. It indeed requires a very long nose to smell 'threats of force' in this plan of purely parliamentary action. . . .

After the Labour Government came into office, the Viceroy of India declared in opening the New Legislative Assembly that he would continue to rule India with a firm hand. He challenged the Nationalists. He also talked of the Communist activities and the danger resulting therefrom. Finally came the statement of the new Secretary of State for India, Lord Olivier. In this statement the Indian policy of the Labour Government was formally formulated. The Labour Government backed up the attitude of the colonial proconsuls. Lord Olivier roundly refused to entertain any proposition to grant further measures of self-government until the Reforms Act had been given a fair trial . . .

The only thing that stands to the credit of the Labour Government is the release of Gandhi. This act of grace was, however, forced upon the government. Besides, there is a deep scheme involved in it. If the Labour Government remains long enough in office, we may expect it to call an Indian deputation to London. Gandhi would be very helpful at the head of this deputation. He is too saintly to forget an act of kindness, and could be depended upon to go back empty-handed, but with a full heart to call upon the Indian people to cultivate brotherly love with the imperialist rulers. Mr MacDonald's profession of self-determination will then easily be converted into his passion for Imperial Federation. But he will not have the satisfaction of performing this inglorious task.

The bankruptcy of the programme of the Second International in

European politics was exposed by the debacle of the German Social Democrats. The Labour Government in England will have very little new to add on that count. The utter hypocrisy of its humanitarian professions has now been demonstrated by the action of the British Labour Party. The peoples of the colonies cannot have the right of self-determination unless war is declared upon Imperialism. But the stalwarts of the Second International talk of self-determination in theory and become the defenders of Imperialism in practice.

Anti-Imperialist Struggle In India*

Slowly, but surely British domination in India is being undermined. It is true that this historic process is not so speedy as many expected or even prophesied. Nevertheless, the process is going on unceasingly. The depression that followed the sudden collapse of the great Non-Cooperation Movement lasted rather long, only to be enlivened, not by an intensified revolutionary activity, but by a concerted effort on the part of the bourgeoisie to challenge the absolute position of Imperialism, on constitutional lines. The development of this new stage has been the outstanding feature of the Indian nationalist struggle during the last twelve months. It has culminated in a political deadlock which has not only nonplussed the nationalist bourgeoisie, but has also placed the British Government in a somewhat uncomfortable position. Some decisive action must be taken from one side or the other to break this deadlock. For the nationalists, it is necessary either to compromise with Imperialism or to go a few steps further towards revolution. Imperialism, on the other hand, is faced with the alternatives: to placate the nationalist bourgeoisie with concessions or to adopt openly the policy of blood and iron. It is likely that the initiative will come from the imperialist side, which today does not dare take the latter course lest the seething volcano of popular discontent erupt, and even the timid bourgeoisie be driven to revolution. A sense of practical politics counsels moderation, if not in word (for the sake of prestige) at least in practice. A slight gesture of generosity will be welcomed by the nationalist bourgeoisie, who will find therein a way out of this deadlock created by themselves. Some administrative reforms, not in the least jeopardizing the British supremacy in matters essential, coupled with measures calculated to remove some of the restrictions on the development of native capitalism, will solve the situation. And this is precisely the solution things in India are heading towards.

Should this temporary solution by looked upon with pessimism? Certainly not; because it is but a stage in the process of undermining Imperialism. Historic reasons prevent the Indian bourgeoisie from launching upon a revolutionary path; but at the same time, their very existence is an objective menace to Imperialism. In every compromise made the former win, however beggarly the compromise may be, and the latter gives up a little of its ground. Therefore, a compromise made does not end the antagonism, but simply prepares the ground for another one eventually. One concession is inevitably followed by the demand for another concession. This is certainly a very long and tedious process, and the historic necessity of a National Revolution cannot be circumvented within the narrow limits of this contemptible barter. But the Indian bourgeoisie, as they are situated, do not want to strike a short-cut. They are not bold enough to throw down the final challenge and unfurl the flag of revolution.

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* *The Communist International*, Vol. 8, No. 6, November, 1924, pp. 83–93. Deletions are indicated with three dots (. . .). SNR

The Indian bourgeoisie are conspicuous for confusion of political thought and timidity of action. The former is expressed through the intellectual poverty of the nationalist movement and the failure to formulate a comprehensive programme of Nationalism; while the latter causes such a surprising phenomenon as the absence of any faction within the nationalist camp which openly stands for a complete break with the imperial connection. The reason for this confusion of thought and timidity of action is to be sought in the history of the last two hundred years.

Timidity of action is caused by ideological confusion. Objectively, the Indian bourgeoisie are a revolutionary factor; but they are totally unconscious of this revolutionary role of theirs, and what is worse still, they are remarkably inclined towards counter-revolution, or rather, reaction. They desire a politico-economic reconstruction of the country, without disturbing the social *status quo*. This strongly reactionary social character of the Indian bourgeoisie makes them timid in political action, because it does not allow them to countenance any revolutionary upheaval of the masses. They not only fail to undertake the historic role of the bourgeoisie—to lead the serf in the revolutionary fight against feudalism—but, on the contrary, are defenders of the modern forms of the latter that prevail in India. The landed aristocracy—both the scions of the old feudal class as well as that created by British Imperialism in its earlier days—is one of the pillars that supports British rule. By failing to deal a mortal blow to this pillar, the nationalist bourgeoisie separate themselves from the social foundation of a revolutionary movement. This being the case, they find themselves hopelessly weak when at close grips with the forces of Imperialism. Hence their timidity of action, typified by the absurd programme of ousting British domination by constitutional warfare, and the conspicuous failure of the vanguard of a subject nation to put forth the demand for complete independence.

The struggle of a subject people to free itself from the yoke of foreign domination, however, is not based solely upon the antagonism between the interests of the native bourgeoisie and Imperialism. The objective necessity for the progress of the entire people is the fundamental factor that gives occasion to this struggle. Any social class, that happens at the given period to stand at the vanguard of the entire people, and which gives expression to this objective necessity, automatically becomes the leader of the struggle. Under normal circumstances, therefore, the bourgeoisie should be the leaders of the anti-imperialist struggle in India. Uptil now, they have been the leaders; but experience has proved their failure to give an account of themselves. They have failed to rise to the situation. Consequently, a movement fraught with immense objective revolutionary possibilities has not developed speedily enough, and Imperialism still appears to prosper, while sitting on the summit of a seething volcano.

To determine the strength or weakness of the Indian nationalist struggle by the action of the bourgeoisie, therefore, would be misleading. The present position of the nationalist bourgeoisie does not indicate the correct revolutionary perspectives in India. On the other hand, it would be equally mistaken to persist in the notion that the bourgeoisie is the standard-bearer of revolution. This notion has its origin in the fact that, at a certain period of history, the bourgeoisie plays a revolutionary role; since it has been so in those countries which today stand at the van of human progress, it is bound to be so in the rest of the world. A particular inter-relation of social forces rendered the bourgeoisie revolutionary in certain countries at a certain epoch of history. It would be a mechanical reading of history to assert that an identical juxtaposition of social forces will occur in every other country. In fact, here in India the social forces are somewhat differently related, and this difference has made itself felt upon the political thoughts and movement of the country.

Nor is India a solitary instance. Russia in broad outlines belonged to the same category. The revolutionary significance of her bourgeoisie was not very considerable. It was left for the proletariat to carry through the bourgeois revolution—to lead the peasantry in the final struggle against the landed aristocracy. If it was so in Russia, it is likely to be more so in India, where the bourgeoisie is even more backward than their Russian confreres. The Indian bourgeoisie is even innocent of the radicalism which prevailed among the intellectual wing of the Russian bourgeoisie in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. All the reactionary cults, which find expression in Gandhism, are more hostile to revolutionary ideas than was the Pan-Slavism of the Russian intellectuals. The Indian bourgeoisie are closely bound up with landlordism, and the majority of the intellectuals are generally conservative in their social outlook.

This being the case, if we accept the action of the bourgeoisie as the only indicator of revolutionary perspectives in India, there rises before us a rather discouraging vision. It is notorious how the Gandhite leadership got frightened at the revolutionary sweep of the movement it pretended to lead. This fright, coupled with an innate anti-revolutionary conviction, induced the petty bourgeoisie to set their face against the great mass movement which threatened the security of the Empire. They systematically sabotaged the movement, and finally succeeded in throwing it into hopeless confusion.

The next stage was the passing of the leadership into the hands of the bourgeoisie. The new leaders condemned the vacillating tactics of the Gandhites and promised to take up a determined fight against the British Government. The struggle between Gandhism and the relatively conscious bourgeois politics was the outstanding feature of the movement for nearly a year. It ended in the rout of Gandhism in politics, and the capture of the nationalist movement by the faction which promised to be the pioneer of a well-organized political apparatus of the bourgeoisie. For all practical purposes, the Nationalist demands were not only divorced from the objective necessity of the masses, but even the grievances of the lower middle class were left out of their purview. The beginning of formulating a nationalist programme, exclusively in accordance with the interests of the bourgeoisie, was made. Such a beginning could not be made without discarding all tendencies towards revolutionary tactics. This is demanded by the actual position of the Indian bourgeoisie. Unwilling to adopt revolutionary tactics, the nationalist bourgeoisie fall back upon the slow process of undermining the position of Imperialism by stages. Their policy is to secure concession after concession, till the entire power passes from the foreign government to the peoples' representatives. The Indian bourgeoisie as a class is wedded to this reformism and, therefore, hopes to accomplish a revolution within the four corners of a non-existent constitution.

This slow process of reformism, which at first sight looks very futile, possesses a deeper significance, owing to the fact that it is carried out upon a revolutionary background. Although the nationalist bourgeoisie fail to mobilize the revolutionary energy of the masses to back up their demands for reform, Imperialism is fully conscious of the existence of the powder magazine, capable at the slightest ignition of blowing it up. It also knows that the dynamic force of nationalism does not lie either in the reactionary doctrines of the lower middle class intellectuals, nor in the 'national demand' of the bourgeoisie, but in the partially manifested will of the masses to revolt against their miserable condition. Imperialism is reluctantly inclined to make petty concessions to the reformist bourgeoisie (whose impotency it is fully aware of) to prevent the possible determination of the bourgeoisie to fall back upon these forces of revolution. The Indian bourgeoisie have repeatedly proved themselves so averse to revolution, that they would court it only as the last resort, if they do it at all even then. Thus the minimum concession would keep them dissatisfied and annoying, but out of harm. The burnt cow dreads the fire. The British government cannot imagine a repetition of the days of 1920–21 without a shudder. They are prepared to bribe the nationalist bourgeoisie to avoid that. Owing to this circumstantial reason, even the timid reformism of the Indian bourgeoisie objectively produces a revolutionary effect. It cuts into the reserves of Imperialism.

In view of this essentially revolutionary character of the situation in India, every phase of the anti-imperialist struggle has its value in the general scheme of events. In the last year, the nationalist bourgeoisie have been busy in organizing the fighting qualities of their class inside a powerful political party. As stated above, owing to deepseated reasons, the programme and tactics of this party still remain essentially reformist. The party leaders do not fail to indulge in bombastic language and veiled threats which, however, are empty. The party is young, lacking the assets of a radical social outlook, constructive political ideology and a firm determination to act. It has not even succeeded in drawing all the bourgeois elements together. Nevertheless, for the first time in the history of the Indian national movement, it has acted as the conscious spokesman of an entire class, and has, therefore, sounded the close of that epoch when Imperialism could play the one section of the bourgeoisie against the other. This is certainly a long step forward . . . .

While a great deal of noise was being made over political questions of paltry importance, concessions of considerable value have been made in the economic field. One of the principal demands of the nationalist bourgeoisie has always been to protect the native industries by a tariff wall. After a continued resistance of two decades, Imperialism has given in on this very vital question. In sequence of the Industrial Commission of 1916-17, according to whose recommendation the economics of Imperialism were placed on a new footing (that of developing India industrially as against the former policy of obstructing), another commission was appointed in 1921 to explore the fiscal ground. The Fiscal Commission was composed of a number of very influential Indian industrialists, together with the representatives of British capital and government. After an exhaustive enquiry of a year, the Fiscal Commission reported in favour of Protection on principle. In accordance with its recommendation, a Tariff Board was appointed to select the industries which should be protected immediately. The selection fell upon the iron and steel industry. On behalf of the industry, Tata and Co. demanded a duty of 30 per cent on manufactured iron and steel imported into the country. The demand was granted with but slight modification. The people will suffer from the high prices that will be caused by this protection to the principal national industry; nevertheless, when the Protection Bill came before the Legislative Assembly, the nationalists abandoned their obstructionist tactics, and voted with the Government. In fact, they complained that the protection was not extensive enough. The effect of this economic concession will be very far-reaching, and will reflect considerably upon the political field. The Indian Government has already expressed its intention of placing, as from the coming year, all its orders for railway material in India. This indicates a very rapid development of the iron and steel industry. British industry will suffer in consequence. But Imperialism is not committing suicide. The protection, which will injure British manufacturers, is not meant only for Indian capital. There is another scheme involved in the whole new policy. British capital is being exported to India to build up the iron and steel industry there behind the tariff walls. Incidentally, the most powerful section of the Indian bourgeoisie controlling the steel industry will be so closely linked up with British banks, that the backbone of bourgeois nationalism will be broken.

The next concession in the economic field is the contemplated removal of the impediment on India's premier industry—textiles. Already during the war, this industry was granted protection which, however, could not be fully effective, owing to the excise duty levied upon the cotton manufactures. Now demand for the removal of this excise duty is being pushed vigorously. The demand is not very seriously opposed. It even finds response in the Anglo-Indian Press. Once this contemplated second step is taken, the acuteness of the conflict between the Indian bourgeoisie and Imperialism will temporarily subside. But the political leaders of the nationalist movement do not belong to the capitalist class. They are mostly intellectuals, and not a few hail from the lower middle class. A reconciliation between British and Indian capital will confirm the reformism of these leaders; but they will keep on pressing for political concessions, in addition to the economic ones. So, in order that the new policy of reconciliation may be worked smoothly, Imperialism will find it advisable to placate the intellectuals also. That means that on both the fronts, economic as well as political, it will be obliged to yield ground, however little it might be in the beginning.

By itself, this conflict is insoluble. Now, if the attempts of Imperialism to smooth it can be counteracted by action on our part to accentuate the conflict, the state of war that obtains today will never end. On the contrary, it will grow acuter every day, and the anti-imperialist struggle will soon exceed the bounds of reformism, and be consciously heading towards revolution. It is obvious what should be the nature of our activities. While supporting the nationalist bourgeoisie in every act of resistance to Imperialism, we should mobilize the revolutionary mass energy which the nationalist bourgeoisie is afraid of touching. The rapid crystallization of bourgeois nationalism around a reformist programme has left the field clear. For the first time in the history of the Indian national movement, there will come into existence a political party demanding separation from the Empire. Nationalist elements, which uptil now followed the bourgeoisie, will enter this party; because the programme of reformism advocated by the bourgeoisie neglects their interests altogether. To aid the organization of this party of revolutionary nationalism is our immediate task. The objective situation is quite ripe, although there are enormous subjective difficulties. The masses are very restive. The peasantry is a veritable inflammable material, while the city proletariat demonstrates its revolutionary zeal whenever there is an opportunity. The process of uniting all these revolutionary elements into an anti-imperialist army is going on steadily. The collapse of bourgeois nationalism, as expressed by the present Parliamentary deadlock will only accentuate this process. The people will see that the reformist programme of the bourgeoisie does not lead anywhere. The centre of gravity of the nationalist movement will be shifted back to its proper place, namely—mass action. As soon as the rank and file of the nationalist forces are freed from the reformist leadership of the bourgeoisie, they will begin to follow the standard of revolution, because in that case, they will be convinced that the anti-imperialist struggle cannot be conducted successfully in a different way. There is every indication that things are moving in that direction, and that the next stage of the Indian movement will be a great advance towards revolution.*

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* The Indian Industrial Commission, appointed in 1916, presented its report in 1918. It stressed that 'in future, Government must play an active part in the industrial development of the country, with the aim of making India more self-contained in respect of men and material'. Among its proposals were 'the creation of Imperial and Provincial Departments of Industries and of an Imperial Industrial service' and 'the giving of technical and financial aid to industries, the encouragement of industrial cooperation, and the provision of improved transport and freight facilities'.

The Indian Fiscal Commission of 1921 'unanimously condemned the existing cotton excise'. The Majority Report recommended 'discriminating protection', and in 1923 this recommendation was adopted in the form of a resolution by the Legislative Assembly. A minority of five members appended a Minute of Dissent to the Report; they advocated more rapid industrialization by means of more extensive protection. Different rates of import duties were levied on different classes of goods—the more significant being import duties of between 10 to 15 percent on iron and steel goods, rails and railway plant, rolling stock, hardware, implements, machinery and textile fabrics. However, 'there was widespread opposition to the free entry of foreign capital into India on the score that it results in monopolistic powers for foreign promoters'.

Proceedings of the Indian Economic Association, 1923; *Report on the Prospects and Conditions of British Trade in India 1922–33*. SNR

Speeches

by
M. N. Roy

at the Fifth Congress of the
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1. Lenin's Greatest Deed: Speech on 18 June.
   Protokoll, I, pp. 38–39.

2. Imperial Plunder, Corruption of the English Proletariat and Conditions of Revolution in England: Speech on 20 June.
   Protokoll, I, pp. 149–153.

3. On the National and Colonial Question: Speech on 1 July.
   Protokoll, II, pp. 638–651.

4. Salute to Clara Zetkin: Speech on 5 July.
   Protokoll, II, p. 871.

5. 'I decline to speak': Speech on 8 July.
   Protokoll, II, p. 999.

The differences over the national and colonial question which figured so very prominently in the Second Congress of the Communist International (1920) were never really resolved, although both Lenin and Roy modified their respective propositions, and their two sets of theses, with amendments, were approved by that Congress (See *Selected Works of M. N. Roy* Vol. I). During the next three years the Comintern was mainly occupied with developments in the West, and Roy, who enjoyed Lenin's trust and respect, had virtually a free hand in developing and propagating his ideas.

The decisive defeat of the attempted revolution in Germany in October 1923 and the death of Lenin on 21 January 1924, which brought out into the open the fierce struggle for power in the Russian Communist Party, provided the setting to the historic Fifth Congress of the Communist International which took place in Moscow from 17 June to 8 July 1924. The agenda of the Congress was published in *The Vanguard* of 1–15 April 1924 (Vol. 4, No. 9). There are different figures of attendance given in different official reports—they vary from 406 to 510 delegates. According to the statistics section of the Executive, questionnaires were not completed by the majority of the parties. However, the two largest parties were the Russian (310,000 members) and the German (350,000 members), and in both the fight for the control of the party was raging.

Stalin, who until then had shown very little interest in the Comintern, now had himself elected to the Presidium and the Executive (*Protokoll* I, p.2, and II, p. 1021). His primary objective was to establish his full control over the Russian Communist Party, but he also wanted to control the Comintern apparatus and eliminate what support his rivals, especially Trotsky, had from Communist parties outside the Soviet Union. The failure of the uprising in Germany and the demonstrated resilience of the bourgeoisie in the West demanded that the Comintern pay greater attention to the possibilities of revolutionary movements in the East, especially in the Colonies. However, the Eurocentric mental habits of the majority of the Comintern leaders and the disinclination of the communists in the metropolitan countries to engage wholeheartedly in movements which would lead to the end of Western dominance, prevented adequate importance being given to revolution in Asia.

In fact in the Fifth Comintern Congress several delegates from Asia complained about the failure of the metropolitan Communist parties to support revolutionary movements in the colonies, and the neglect of the eastern question by the Comintern. Roy was most articulate in his criticism, but the complaint was also made (*Protokoll*, I. pp. 237, 379–81, 384–5; II, pp. 685–89) by Nguyen Ai-Quoc (Ho Chi Minh), Sen Katayama (Japan) and Semaoen (Java). Roy stressed the crucial importance of revolutionary movements in the colonies to any successful revolution in the metropolitan countries, and commented critically on the nature of the weakness of the metropolitan working class and its leadership. He also insisted that in the colonies while the indigenous bourgeoisie would have to be pushed hard to increase its demands, it was incapable of providing revolutionary leadership which must come from the organized and class-conscious sections of the workers and peasants. He cautioned against the danger of 'the fight for independence' being 'sacrificed on the altar of compromise between the native middle class and the imperialists', and urged the Comintern to support not the colonial upper class nationalists but genuine revolutionary movements and to help in organizing the workers and peasants in the colonies into a party of their own. His speeches indicated that he upheld the position which he had originally presented at the Second Congress, with some elaborations but no amendments.

The Comintern's official position, however, does not seem to have become more definite and unambiguous at the Fifth Congress than at the Second Congress. Zinoviev's main report (to which Roy referred in his speech on 20 June) or concluding speech avoided mention of the eastern question. The resolution on tactics recognized that it was essential to devote 'far greater attention than before to work in the East, using that word in its broadest sense', and 'to support the movement of all oppressed nationalities directed against imperialism'. However, when Manuilski's report on the national and colonial question (*Protokoll*, II, pp. 620–37) was severely and extensively criticized by Roy, it was considered expedient to refer the proposed draft resolution of the ECCI to Stalin for his opinion. Stalin's response was presumably not known to earlier historians of the Comintern, but in a recent official publication from Moscow some of the details have been mentioned. In his chapter on 'The Strategy and Tactics of the Communist International in [sic] the National and Colonial Question' in the symposium volume *The Comintern and the East : The Struggle for the Leninist Strategy and Tactics in National Liberation Movements* edited by R. A. Ulyanovsky and brought out by Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979 (tr. by D. Fidlon, pp. 169–170) A. B. Reznikov wrote:

'J. V. Stalin studied the draft (of the ECCI resolution on the national and colonial question at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern—SNR) and on 31 July 1924 sent his remarks to D. Z.

Manuilsky in which he made the following point: "You mention differences with Roy who underscores the social aspect of the struggle in the colonies. I don't know how these differences concretely express themselves. But I should say that there are certain places in the resolution of the Congress which I do not agree with precisely from the standpoint of the social aspect". Continuing, Stalin wrote: "I believe that the time has come to raise the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in the liberation struggle in the colonies such as India, whose bourgeoisie is conciliatory (with British imperialism), and victory over whom (i.e., over the conciliatory bourgeoisie) is the main condition for liberation from imperialism. A whole number of points in the resolution speak of criticizing the national bourgeoisie, exposing its half-heartedness and so forth. That is not what is needed. It is necessary to smash the conciliatory national bourgeoisie, i.e. to wrest the worker and peasant masses from its influence in order to achieve genuine liberation from imperialism. Without fulfilling this preliminary task it is impossible to achieve victory over British imperialism. The basic feature of the new situation in colonies such as India is that the national bourgeoisie. (i.e., the most influential and wealthy bourgeoisie) is afraid of a revolution and prefers a compromise with foreign imperialism to the complete liberation of their country from imperialism. In order to smash this bloc it is necessary to concentrate all blows at the conciliatory national bourgeoisie and advance the slogan of the hegemony of the proletariat as the basic condition of liberation from imperialism. In other words, it is a question of preparing the proletariat for leadership of the liberation movement in colonies such as India, and to push the conciliatory national bourgeoisie out of this honourable post. The greatest shortcoming of the Congress resolution on the eastern and colonial question is that it does not take this new decisive aspect in the situation into account and lumps all the colonies together".'

Stalin's support to Roy's criticism determined the fate of the draft resolution. It was not endorsed by the Fifth Congress but referred to a special Commission which, however, did not produce any resolution or recommendation (E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country 1924–26*, Penguin, 1964, Vol. 3, p. 90 and pp. 633–35). Manuilski in his reply 'made no serious attempt to deal with Roy's arguments' (Carr, p. 634), but he attacked Roy as a 'deviationist', and his views as a 'reflection of Rosa Luxemburg's nihilism' (*Protokoll*, II, pp. 999–1004). Roy's request to be allowed to speak in defence of his position had been refused. However, at the first session of the Congress he had been elected to the Presidium (together with, among others, Zinoviev, Clara Zetkin, Stalin, Bukharin and Trotsky); now on the last day of the Congress he was elected to the Executive Committee of the Comintern (together with, among others, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Stalin, Kamenev and Rykov from Russia; Ercoli (Togliatti) from Italy; Manuilski from Ukraine; Kuusinen from Finland; Kolarov from Bulgaria; Pollit from England; Foster from the United States; Katayama from Japan and Semaoen from Java) (*Protokoll*, II, pp. 1021–22). At the Congress Roy was also elected a member of the Political Commission, Programme Commission, National and Colonial Commission, Russian Commission and Japanese Commission (*Protokoll*, II, pp. 1055–1063).

Dmitri Zakharievich Manuilski, who was Roy's principal opponent at the Fifth Congress, was senior to Roy by four years. He joined the Bolsheviks at the age of twenty (1903), was most of the time an emigré from 1907 to 1917, but became an active party organizer in Ukraine after the October revolution. From 1923 to 1939 he was a member of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. He took full advantage of the power struggle in the Russian Party and the Comintern, backed Stalin, and was eventually rewarded by being made Secretary of the Comintern in 1928, a position he retained till its dissolution in 1943. From 1946 to 1953 he even served as acting Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. No theorist himself, he belonged to the *apparatchiki* that Stalin built to reach and maintain his supreme position in the Party, the State and the Comintern. Roy's ouster in 1928 from the highest positions in the Comintern (in 1926 Roy was member of the ECCI, the Presidium, the Secretariat and the Orgbureau) owed not a little to manoeuvrings of the *apparatchiki*, especially Manuilski, Piatnitski, Kuusinen and Lozovski.

The most detailed and complete record of the proceedings of the Fifth Congress was given in the *Protokoll des V. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*. Summaries of Roy's speeches at the Congress were published in *Inprecor* and *The Vanguard*, but we have used the *Protokoll* for the full text. Translation from the Karl Liebknecht Verlag reprint in two volumes has been specially made for the present edition. Page numberings in the introductory note and footnotes refer to the pagination in the reprint edition. SNR

Lenin's Greatest Deed*

ROY (India): Comrades! While the representatives of the revolutionary world-proletariat, who are gathered here today in the heart of world-revolution, wish to give you their greetings, our minds are dominated by one thought only. It is that this is the first world Congress of the Communist International which takes place without our beloved leader. But, comrades, today we are strengthened by the conviction that, although Lenin is no longer amongst us, we stand here as one huge army under the banner of Leninism, we are convinced that this huge army of the revolutionary proletariat will march under the streaming banner of Leninism towards victory.

Comrades, this is neither the time nor the place to explain how much the Communist International has done for the proletariat of the world, thanks to Lenin. However, I will point to one effect of Leninism, namely that under Lenin's leadership the International has become a *true* International. Before that, Marxism was prostituted under the leadership of the socialist patriots at the Second International. It was left to Lenin to save Marxism from the hands of the revisionists; it was left to Lenin to turn the International into a *true* International; it was Lenin who told the avant-garde of the proletariat that in the Marxist sense the proletariat not only comprised the working classes of the developed imperialist and capitalist countries of Europe and of the Americas, but also hundreds of millions of working masses of colonial and semi-colonial peoples. This is Lenin's greatest deed (Tat) to which I wish to direct attention on this opening day of the Congress of the Communist International, and while we find ourselves face to face with immense difficulties, which we shall have to surmount to arrive at final victory, we shall have to proceed with Lenin's teaching in mind.

Comrades! Under the banner of Leninism, we, the revolutionary avant-garde of the world's proletariat shall gain victory.

Comrades! Join in the call: long live the memory of our leader Lenin! Long live Leninism!

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* On the first day of the Congress (17 June) Roy, among others, was elected to the Presidium, and Zinoviev in his opening address remembered and saluted the 'Indian revolutionaries' who had been sentenced at Kanpur to four years' rigorous imprisonment. The next day was devoted to Lenin. After Roy had been introduced by Kolarov who chaired the session, Roy spoke on Lenin. The title of the speech has been provided by the editor, *Protokoll*, I, pp. 38–39. SNR

Imperialist Plunder, Corruption of the English Proletariat and Conditions of Revolution in England*

ROY (India): Comrades! The importance which Zinoviev's report attributes to the English problem is raised at the right moment. In fact, it is a little belated because the CI ought to have directed its attention to the creation of a truly communist people's party in England already some time ago. The reason is simple. In spite of suffering financial and economic setbacks due to the war England continues to be still the most important factor in world finance and politics. Just as Central Europe, especially Germany, remains the eye of the storm of world revolution, so it cannot be denied that the middle-class dictatorship of the whole world has its focal point in England. If, therefore, we do not consider particularly this stronghold of our enemy, our efforts to organize our forces in the enemy camp will remain ineffective. It is well known that England has taken over the leadership in attempts to consolidate the bourgeois system around the globe, and in view of that fact, the necessity to have a party, a truly communist party in England cannot be denied. Formulating this necessity, however, is not enough. It is easy to formulate this. Establishing a need, however, is yet far removed from satisfying it, and the task to develop in England a communist people's party is very difficult and complex.

The two preceding speakers, Comrade Murphy from England and Comrade Petrovski have indicated a number of difficulties which confront our comrades in England in the organization of a communist party. I have to state, however, that they have not succeeded in indicating the facts quite clearly. I doubt that the Comintern as a whole has a clear picture of the difficulties which face us in England. When we speak of the organization of a communist party in England, we must not forget that England, i.e., the islands which form the Kingdom of Britain, is merely the top of a large political, economic and financial tree. If we wish to destroy the top of a tree without giving due consideration to the extensively ramified roots which feed the top, it would be a mistake, and we would duly experience disappointment in our task. If we talk of the organization of a revolutionary party of the proletariat, we then must firstly take into account the historical evolution of the British proletariat. We must pay attention to the special factors which played a role in the evolution of the British labour movement.

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* On 19 June Zinoviev delivered his principal report (*Protokoll*, I, pp. 42–107) to be followed next morning by Varga's report on the World Economic situation (*Protokoll*, I, pp. 108–131). In his report, Zinoviev *inter alia* asserted that 'the chief task of the Communist International is now transferred to *England* in all fields' (*Protokoll*, I, p. 77). The British delegates insisted that united front with the Labour Movement was indispensable for the growth of the Communist Party. In the discussions which followed Zinoviev's and Varga's reports Roy spoke on the afternoon of Friday, 20 June, exposing the nature of the weakness of the British working class and the need for a genuine communist party there. The title of the speech has been provided by the editor. *Protokoll*, I, pp. 149–153. SNR

We all know that the British labour movement, as well as the socialist idea and socialist theory in England, has developed alongside the powerful development of British Imperialism. In consequence of this fact, the British proletariat as a class as also the English interpretation of the theory of socialism is distorted and permeated thoroughly by the conscious or subconscious spirit of Imperialism. The first difficulty which our party has to combat and overcome in England is embedded in the Imperialist spirit (more correctly, illusion) of the English proletariat and in the distortion of the theory of the labour movement in England. I should explain that our English party has long since recognized this need but it has neglected to deal with this task. It could not perceive the correct type of campaign against this problem, and uptil now the Communist International could not give appropriate leadership either.

If we, therefore, wish to handle the matter of developing a communist party in England in a practicable manner, if we wish to discuss this question seriously, it is up to the CI to lead the English section accordingly. It has been mentioned here and also previously on several occasions, that the English working class still believed in the Labour Party and the Labour government. Now we hear for the first time a comrade, Comrade Petrovski, declare before the World Congress that a significant proportion of the English proletariat has lost its faith in the Labour government. That is news to me and I believe, it is news to many of our comrades present here.* (Hear, hear!) The English proletariat not only has not lost faith in the Labour Party and the Labour government, but it still has, at least it is the case with a great part of the English proletariat, faith in the system of bourgeois democracy and the parliament.

Why is it so? The English proletariat is not an iota worse than the proletariat of any other country. The English proletariat possesses all objective revolutionary proletarian traits. As Marxists, we have to say that it is potentially the largest revolutionary factor. We are convinced that in due course it will give expression to its revolutionary significance and overthrow the capitalist system, but at the same time, we must be realists. We must not ignore facts, and the facts are that the English proletariat is not only loyal to the labour leadership but, to a large extent, also to the bourgeois system, the democratic system. Why is it so? The reason is due to the historical facts that the English labour movement grew together with the gigantic development of English capitalism, that the English proletariat shared significantly the income of the imperialist plunder and still does so today.

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* D. Petrovski who spoke before Roy on 20 June (*Protokoll*, I, pp. 146–149) was a Bundist-Menshevik who lived as an emigré in the United States till his return to Russia in 1917 when he joined the Bolsheviks. In Great Britain he worked for the Comintern under the name A. J. Bennet and reported directly on the activities of the CPGB to Moscow H. Pelling, *The British Communist Party*, London 1958. SNR

In view of the fact that the roots of British capitalism, of British imperialism, are not confined to the area of the British isles but are ramified widely in far distant dominions and colonies, the British capitalists can make concessions, bribe the English labour aristocracy which not only enables them to maintain their rule over, but at the same time to corrupt, the psyche and theory of the English labour movement.

We, comrades, must therefore fight this corrupting factor. But how can we do this? If the English communist party is to combat British imperialism, to overthrow British imperialism and to organize the working masses which are exploited and dominated by this imperialism, then the task of the English communist party must transcend the borders of the British Isles. The English communist party has to be an 'imperial' communist party (Reichspartei), if one may be permitted to use this expression, because it has to fight an empire (Reich). But you must not think that I am speaking here in favour of communist imperialism. There is a difference between imperial communism and communist imperialism.* What I mean hereby is that our English comrades have to realize, when speaking of a united front, that they have to establish the united front not merely with the union bosses. Unfortunately, I have gained this impression from Comrade Murphy's speech. Murphy declares that the peculiar structure of the English labour movement has made it necessary for the English communist party to maintain a close relationship not only with the rank-and-file union membership, but also with the leaders of the unions. This is a decidedly perilous interpretation of the united-front tactics. Winning over the people for the communist party, which is the aim of united-front tactics, was until now not possible in

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* In the original. 'Es gibt einen Unterschied zwischen einem Reichskommunismus (Imperial Communism) und einem kommunistischen Imperialismus'. *Protokoll*, I, p. 151. SNR

England because of the already mentioned corrupting influence. The error lies in that the united-front tactics are not applied on an appropriately wider scale, not in regard to the whole of the empire. Just as the basis of British imperialism extends over the lands of the colonies, so also the activities of the vanguard of the proletariat for the overthrow of this imperialism have to be extended over these parts of the globe. In England the united-front slogan is of far greater importance than in any other country. Here, we must establish a united front not merely with the masses of the labour movement in England—not a united front of resolutions, of declarations of sympathy—but a united front, an organizational united front with the millions upon millions of colonial workers whose exploitation enables the British capitalists to corrupt the English proletariat, to win over the leadership of the English proletariat and to erect in this manner an insurmountable obstacle for our British section.

Before concluding I wish to mention yet another matter in this regard. There are also various other factors which determine the revolutionary spirit of the English proletariat. If we hold the view that the development of a communist party in England and a proletarian revolution in England is possible independently of the other parts of the British Empire, then that is a great mistake, and such a notion could even render the whole success of the revolution problematical and put in doubt the possibility of organizing a truly communist party in England. The communist party has to approach the proletariat and call upon it to overthrow the capitalist system. A revolution, however, is not simply brought about by emotion. If the proletariat is ready for a revolution, it thinks of the future at the same time. But here a big problem arises. England produces foodstuffs which would only last a few weeks. Let us assume that a revolution is occurring in England and that the proletariat is successful in defeating the bourgeoisie and in taking over the reins of power. These islands, however, can be blocked, and in a few weeks the proletariat would be forced to surrender because of starvation. That is a factor which plays on the subconscious of the revolutionary will of the English working class. If the communists were to make such a romantic proposal, they would not follow and would not run with their heads into a brick wall. And if we arrived with a programme and told them of the perniciousness of the Empire and of the need to defeat the Empire from which they received till then considerable advantage, they will not follow us.

The organization of a communist party in England, comrades, can therefore not be the result of our activity in England alone. It cannot be denied that such activity must play a major role. The activity in England, however, has to be complemented by activity in other parts of the Empire where the roots lie that feed the centre part. Not only a successful revolution, but the organization of a genuine communist mass party, which is now an absolute necessity, is only possible in England if the English section of the Communist International is able to proceed to the task of uniting the total working class of the whole Empire to form a united army fighting British Imperialism.*

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* In the course of discussion in the Congress, repeated references were made to Roy's speech by a number of delegates, stressing the importance of his view. Thus Nguyen Ai-Quoc (Ho Chi Minh), Schueller, Wynkoop (*Protokoll*, I, pp. 237, 251, 341–2). However, at the session of the Congress on 28 June, Ruth Fischer reported that additions and amendments proposed by Roy to revise the Comintern's programme in the colonies and to restrict its activities to the building of workers' parties had not been accepted by the Political Commission but passed on to the Colonial Commission for its consideration (*Protokoll*, II, p. 595). Roy was a member of both Commissions while Fischer represented the German party in the Political Commissions.

J. T. Murphy, mentioned by Roy in his speech, was a British Communist who served the Comintern as an apparatus-man during the twenties. He was made a member of the International Control Commission at the Fifth Congress, a position in which he was re-confirmed at the Sixth Congress where the backed Kuusinen on his distorted view of 'decolonization'. In his autobiography (*New Horizons*, London, 1941) Murphy described Roy thus: 'the tall, superior, Brahmin Indian' (p. 147), 'a tall fine figure of a man, with black hair and glittering eyes, a handsome Brahmin . . . of all the Indians I have met he was the most arrogant and showed his hatred of the white man, especially the Englishman, in his every glance' (p. 240). Murphy also claimed in the same autobiography that he (Murphy) 'was in charge of the British section (of the Comintern) . . . (it) meant not merely England but the Dominion, India and the Colonies'. In 1932 he was pushed out of CPGB by R. P. Dutt and Harry Pollitt. SNR

On the National and Colonial Question

Introductory editorial note

On 30 June at the twentieth session of the Congress the report of the National and Colonial Commission (*Protokoll*, II, pp. 620–637) was presented by Manuilski who was Chairman of that Commission. He was followed on Tuesday, 1 July by Roy who opened the debate on the report. Among other participants in the discussion which lasted the whole day and occupied the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions, Ternik (Germany) agreed with Roy that the actual situation and problems of each country should be examined separately (*Protokoll*, II, p.664), Guilbeaux (France) spoke of Roy as 'representing revolutionary nationalism in opposition to the bourgeois democratic movement in India represented by Gandhi' (*Protokoll*, II, p.670). Douglas (England) spoke in defence of the British Communist Party in relation to the colonies and remarked that Roy overestimated the significance of the Indian proletariat and underestimated the strength of the Indian Nationalist movement (*Protokoll* II, p. 690), and Pepper (U.S.A.) gratuitously reminded Roy that it was after all the Comintern which had provided him with a platform to voice his grievances for which he should be grateful and he appealed to the Comintern to reject Roy's critique and his view (*Protokoll*, II, p.697–8). Pepper, in fact, was the *alias* adopted by the Hungarian J. Pogany when he was sent as a Comintern agent to the United States in 1922. Taking full advantage of divisions among American Communists Pepper established himself there as a powerful manipulator. Before the Fifth Congress he was recalled to Moscow in April 1924. He was appointed next year as head of the Comintern Executive's newly created information section.

For the text of Roy's speech, see *Protokoll* , II, pp.638–51. SNR

ROY (India): Comrades! There is no longer any need to stress the importance of the topic which has been placed on today's agenda for debate. Today this has virtually become an axiom for the Communist International and its various national sections. If this question did not receive sufficient attention, it was not due to a lack of assessing its importance in general but due to the fact that this question's theoretical importance had not been grasped correctly.

We have the Theses of the Second Congress in which the basic principles have been put down. We all have accepted these Theses and we all claim that we are using these Theses in our activity. I must declare, however, that not many among us have carefully studied these Theses or have drawn conclusions from these Theses correctly. Wherefrom stem all misunderstandings, all difficulties and the apparent neglect of questions whose importance has been generally recognized by the Comintern as a whole. Before embarking on the practical part of the question, therefore, that is, before I present you with a survey of the revolutionary movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries during the one-and-a half years which have passed since the Fourth Congress, I deem it necessary to direct your attention to the Theses of the Second Congress. I am going to do this because it is my view that these Theses are frequently misinterpreted, without having been perused carefully. A brief examination of these Theses will enable us to understand fully the events in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and to interpret them accurately. Because only then and then only, when we have grasped the theoretical meaning of the Theses of the Second Congress, will we be able to comprehend the significance of the revolutionary movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and to gather together all local revolutionary forces against Imperialism, to comprehend our task to win over the oppressed peoples as allies of the revolutionary proletariat in the capitalist countries of the East.

In particular, I shall mention one fact: In the resolution of the report of the executive there is one item which runs counter to the Theses of the Second Congress. My proposal for an amendment to the resolution was, however, rejected on the ground that it was not in agreement with the Theses of the Second Congress. I would like to prove at this Congress that it was my proposed amendment which concurred with the Theses of the Second Congress and not the part of the resolution in question. I shall further prove that, irrespective of the resolution being in contradiction to the Theses of the Second Congress, the experiences since the Second Congress have shown that it is not practicable. Resolutions are passed in order to be put into practice; therefore, they must be of a kind that can be put into practice. The resolution stated that 'the executive, in order to win over the revolutionary population of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, has to be in direct contact with national freedom movements, that the executive has always endeavoured to have such direct contact and will have it in future too'. It has obviously been forgotten that this aim to establish direct contact with any nationalist movement has not always met with success. I shall explain the reasons for this lack of success.

Now there are, comrades, many instances in the Theses of the Second Congress which do not warrant such tactics by the executive.

I do not have sufficient time to read out the whole text of the Theses here, which however would be rather useful because many comrades quote the authority of these Theses without having read them. I shall merely list one or two instances to show that the executive's tactics as formulated in the resolution are not supported by the Theses. Thus, for example, one part reads: 'All communist parties must actively support revolutionary freedom movements. The kind of support is determined by (the results of) an investigation of the prevailing conditions as carried out by the party where such exists'.* Comrades, it means that the support for a revolutionary freedom movement has to be granted, and that the form of support granted has to be determined by way of an investigation of the prevailing circumstances. Comrade Lenin did not ignore the axiom that a movement or a class, which may have been of some revolutionary significance (at one phase), may no longer possess the same revolutionary significance (at another phase, for example, in 1924). The strategy which was appropriate in 1920 need not be appropriate in 1924. The parties or social classes in the colonies, which in 1920 might have been a possible ally of the proletariat, need not necessarily remain so now. It is therefore perilous to set down any hard and fast rule which, without attention to any changed conditions, is to be of valid use. This led till now to an absence of any practical activity, a position which we regret and which we wish to remedy. Some have rebuked the parties of the imperialist countries for having done little or nothing in this regard. But, comrades, if we wish to put an end to this inactivity, this lack of any practical initiative on the part of the national sections in this matter, we have to eliminate the fundamental error which one commits if one reads these Theses in a mechanical fashion and insists on their mechanical application.

With reference to the social classes with which the Communist International ought to have direct links, the Theses state the following: 'We must endeavour to invest as far as possible the movement of the peasants with a revolutionary character, to organize all peasants and exploited people into soviets and thus to establish the closest possible links between the communist proletariat of western Europe and the revolutionary peasant movement in the East as well as the colonial and (other) subjugated countries'.* Here, comrades, it is clearly stated which social classes in the economically retarded colonial countries are objectively the most revolutionary ones. As in most colonial and semi-colonial countries capitalism is not fully developed, it would be romantic to speak of a purely proletarian movement or a purely proletarian party; there are, however, in these countries throngs of peasants who are potentially the most revolutionary factor. In any revolutionary freedom movement in the colonies, the peasants are destined to play a role of the greatest importance. It is, therefore, stated clearly in the Theses that the proletariat of the capitalist countries should have contact especially with this peasant population. This requires the application of the united-front tactics on a far broader basis. We have to organize a united anti-imperialist front between the proletariat of the capitalist countries and the exploited poor peasantry on the other side of the European countries' borders. This extended application of the united-front slogan is particularly required in the case of the imperial countries. In countries such as England, where a peasantry as it were does not exist, the proletariat has to win over the sympathy and the support of the peasantry of the colonial countries.

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* Roy here quoted from Lenin's Thesis No. 11(a) as amended and adopted by the Second Congress. SNR

* The quotation is from Lenin's Thesis No. 11(d) at the Second Congress. SNR

Another quote from the Theses:

'It is the Communist International's duty to support the revolutionary movement in the colonies and the underdeveloped countries only for the purpose of bringing together the elements of future proletarian parties—of the truly, and not just nominally communist ones—in all underdeveloped countries and of educating them to recognize their special task, i.e., the task combating the bourgeois-democractic bias within their own nation.'*

The meaning of this sentence is clear. It is the Comintern's aim to unite under its banner alongside the advance proletariat the various social elements which will eventually join a proletarian party; and indeed the Theses demand the fight against bourgeois-democratic trends. We must educate the working masses to develop their consciousness. By acting thus, we strengthen the battle for national freedom. That, comrades, in brief is the character of the Theses of the 2nd Congress. Nowhere does it say that the Comintern should withhold its support of nationalist freedom movements in the colonies. It is merely stated that such support does not require any direct contact with bourgeois nationalists who do not desire any contact with the Communist International, but that the Comintern should establish contact with revolutionary organizations of the working classes and peasantry. But in our resolution here we find not a word on that. It is merely stated that the executive should have direct contact with the national liberation movement. It is a mistake, however, to generalize. The national liberation movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is not homogeneous. We cannot derive a formula from it. It takes on different forms in different countries depending on the prevailing conditions. The movement comprises different social classes. How can we establish contact which is to achieve practical results if we stand on uncertain ground? I refer to the weak points in the strategy pursued to-date by the Comintern and ask for a revision of this attitude. The fact that the various national sections have omitted to pay sufficiently practical attention to this question is not due to a deliberate stance but to the confusion which reigns in the Communist International regarding this question, and until it is clarified, we will not succeed in obtaining the desired results.

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* The quotation is from Lenin's Thesis No. 11 (e). SNR

I now come to the next part of my report. We must ask ourselves: has the Communist International been successful in establishing relations with the nationalist bourgeoisie in the colonial countries? It has not managed to do so with the exception of cases where a so-called nationalist state existed in the semi-colonial countries. In these cases certain friendly diplomatic relations have been established between the Soviet Government and the nationalist states, with which however, who do not wish to deal now. We are speaking here of the relationship of the Communist International, that is, the relationship of the revolutionary proletariat in the capitalist countries of the West with the revolutionary movement and the populace of the Eastern countries. In order to discover the reason for the fact that we have failed to develop direct contact with the nationalist movements in these countries, we have to analyse the social character of these movements. I have already noted how difficult it is to classify the social elements of these movements in all of these countries; it is, therefore, totally impossible to stipulate a general rule which could be applied to all of these countries. The colonial and semi-colonial countries can be divided into at least three groups:

1. The most backward, which still exist in the condition of a patriarchal feudal system.
2. The semi-colonial countries, which nominally are national entities, but which are under financial and often also military control of foreign imperialism.
3. The colonies proper which remain completely under the political, economic and military rule of one of the imperialist great powers.

The first group does not play a significant revolutionary role at present because although there are some notable instances of insurrections and disturbances due to the brutal form of exploitation, they are so disorganized, so spasmodic and frequently incited by the reactionary influence of the priest-caste and the feudal patriots, that it is difficult to bring them under systematic leadership. Nevertheless, we must realize that at a given stage of social development, these social classes represent the most advanced revolutionary factor, and therefore we have to acknowledge them as our allies and have to endeavour to grant them all possible support. However, we have to find a practical way in giving such support. If we do not do that, our support will be no more than mere words. We can pass resolutions, but these resolutions will be of no practical value whatever to these peoples. In the semi-colonial countries, too, such as Turkey, China, Persia, etc., it is difficult to discover a uniform political line which ought to determine our action. These categories have to be split into sub-categories. Our policy of what stand we take must be varied accordingly. In the third category, the actual colonial countries, we find the same difficulty. There, too, no uniformity exists. When we confront, therefore, such complex and difficult problems, we must pay the closest attention to the facts. We must perceive reality clearly and we must not allow ourselves to be misled by a brilliant formula. This, unfortunately, is what we have done so far, and that is why we could not achieve greater success.

It is necessary here that a point be clarified, in the absence of which, I am sure, the foregoing could cause misunderstanding. One might assume that I support what Comrade Bukharin once recommended, namely, 'self-determination of the working people but not the whole nation'. However, this is not the case. It is generally acknowledged—and this question has been dealt with already at the Second Congress—that the Communist International recognizes the historical necessity of fighting for the right to self-determination of all oppressed nationalities and peoples. However, when we advocate this demand, we face the need to decide how these diverse enslaved nationalities and oppressed peoples can realize their right to self-determination. If we recognize the right to self-determination of the whole nation and not merely of the working masses, we do not thus recognize necessarily the right to self-determination of the middle and upper classes of these oppressed nationalities excluding at the same time the working masses. Rather, just as the upper classes of oppressed peoples have no exclusive ownership of the right to self-determination, so the proletariat or the working masses have no sole right to it. However, it is necessary to analyse the facts in order to see which of these social classes in the given situation ought to take on the leadership in the struggle or play the most important role in the fight for liberation. Although the Communist International must and does support in principle all liberation movements, it is required for practical purposes—if such support is to become a practical one-to determine which class, which social element, is objectively capable of carrying the fight through to victory, as we have to liaise directly with that class. This liaison would in practice afford us with the means to give support to the whole nation. That will be the workable way.

We now have to review briefly the revolutionary movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries since the Fourth Congress to note which social classes have played till now a predominant role in nationalist movements, what their position is at present and what sort of prospects the movements have in the various countries. In other words: we have to descend from the isolated heights of theory to the reality of the factual situation. Comrade Manuilski asserted something yesterday he would not have done if he had known the facts. He stated that during the past year a strong revival of the nationalist movement has taken place in British India. In reality, comrades, the reverse is the case. The past year has been a period of the worst depression in the national movement in India. The national movement under the leadership of the bourgeoisie and mainly the lower middle classes, which had assumed enormous dimensions and contained such grand revolutionary possibilities that it filled the hearts of the British imperialists with fear in 1920 and 1921, is a thing of the past. When we now hear at the World Congress that our future tactics be determined on the basis of so false a picture of the facts, it is only natural that we shall achieve nothing.

Comrade Manuilski cites an example: the strike in Bombay.

I must say a few words about the strike in Bombay*. If such a strike had occurred in a European country, it would have been of the greatest significance as a revolutionary political struggle. However, because it occurred in a colonial country, its great revolutionary significance was not grasped. Very few of us know anything about it. Comrades, it was a general strike comprising the whole textile industry—150,000 workers, of whom 33,000 were women, went on strike and held out for three months against the combined opposition of Indian capitalism and British Imperialism. The Bombay strike was a classical example of class struggle. And here in the Communist International this example of class struggle is regarded as an indication of the revival of the nationalist movement in India? Is that not a regrettable error, comrades? As so little is known about this strike, it may be opportune to relate its history briefly. It will also be of interest to our English comrades, who, I am convinced, know more about it than all other present here. The origin of the Bombay strike is to be found in the conflict between Indian capitalism and British Imperialism; in more concrete terms: in the clash of interests of the textile industry in Bombay and that of Lancashire. Due to the fact that wages in India are extraordinarily low, Indian textile manufacturers naturally are able to undercut the imported goods from Lancashire. The British government fully supported the textile interests of Lancashire during the whole period in order to prevent any undercutting by Bombay manufacturers. During the war and post-war and post-war years, in consequence of the strike movement of 1919/20 and due to some pressure from the Government which did not desire unnecessary disturbances, the wages of the workers in Bombay were raised in some measure. The cause of the strike was that in 1922 the Bombay employers wished to withdraw the few concessions which the workers had been granted. When the employers made this intention known, the workers protested in unison and refused to accept the proposed conditions. Here, comrades, we come to the role of nationalism. What happened? The nationalist leaders, who, to a significant degree led the Indian unions, these petty bourgeois humanists who have, in general, a great deal of influence among the working classes, the bourgeois radicals, these Fabians, who are today the instruments of Macdonaldism in India, these people said to the workers: Look, dear friends, we are very sorry that you have to go hungry. But national interests are concerned, and if the prices of Bombay textiles do not become cheaper, then Lancashire cloth will come to India which will be damaging to our national interests. You therefore will have to starve, you will have to accept lower wages. The workers replied to this that they did not wish to go hungry and that they would therefore offer resistance. For the first time in the history of the Indian labour movement, the workers turned against these people who had been idolized till now by the working classes and whose orders were always followed without argument; meetings were held in which the workers declared themselves against these leaders. They stated: We will not listen to you, we don't care about the national interests, we fight for our stomachs.

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* The Bombay textile workers' strike began on 15 January 1924 and lasted for over two months. It involved 160,000 workers and 81 mills and accounted for the loss of 7.75 million man days. It was one of the biggest strikes up-to-date; several workers were killed by police firing. The strike was reported in *The Vanguard* (Vol. 4 Nos. 3–4; No. 6) and in *Inprecor* (Vol. 4, No. 25, April 1924). SNR

At the beginning of the fight, the petty bourgeois nationalist gave lip service to the strikers because it was a struggle of such gigantic proportions. As the strike developed, however, everyone abandoned the workers and they had to carry on the strike alone. The workers were locked out—of the 83 textile firms in Bombay, 81 were closed. After two months, workers were faced with starvation. There actually were cases of death due to starvation. Wherever the slightest disturbances occurred, machine guns and rifles were used ruthlessly, and the strikers were murdered. The nationalist remained quiet. When matters reached the stage where workers died from starvation but still refused to work under conditions set down by the employers, an aid committee was formed which made submissions to the Indian National Congress for a grant of a few thousand rupees to alleviate the position of the starving workers, but the plea was rejected by the National Congress.

Of course, the incident has another aspect; the attitude of the British Labour Party towards the battle of the Indian labourers. The strike erupted just at that time when Macdonald came to power. The time allowed for my speech, however, does not permit me to deal with such details.

Comrade Manuilski mentioned also certain bloody battles of the peasantry as an indication of the revival of the national movement. This assertion was correct and yet incorrect. It is correct that bloody battles did occur, battles which were suppressed by the military might of British Imperialism. But Comrade Manuilski was wrong to interpret these bloody revolts as an indication of the revival of the national movement. In reality they are an indication of the fact that the first form of the nationalist struggle is already past. They are an indication of the fact that the apparent united national front agaist foreign rule has been split thoroughly because of the class conflict which is growing more acute day by day in the ranks of nationalism.

Comrades! It is very important that we take cognizance of this fact. It is very important that we do not simply read certain incidents, certain news in the papers and draw hasty conclusions from these. We have to read and examine the situation in order to draw the right conclusions and decide on our tactics accordingly.

Comrades! These bloody conflicts, which occur frequently in India, are the rebellion of the exploited peasantry against the native rich landowners. Just as we observe in the cities the rebellion of the Indian proletariat against capitalism, we observe on the land the revolt of the exploited peasants against their exploitation by the Indian landowners. Two years ago, these conflicts had not been as acute. The dissatisfaction of the peasantry and the working classes, which is a consequence of the conditions during the war period and post-war period, was mobilized by the bourgeoisie and became evident in the great nationalist movement of 1920/21. At first, the bourgeoisie did not comprehend the significance of the revolutionary forces of which it found itself to be the leader, like it or not. As soon as the revolutionary forces became threatening, the bourgeoisie was first to reject all types of revolutionary mass action. If this had not happened, we could tell a different story about British Imperialism. The movement was so revolutionary and so mighty that, if the national middle class had not sabotaged it, it would have brought about the collapse of the stronghold of Imperialism. The movement could not be quashed by any external power if it had not been weakened by internal conflicts and argument. The movement failed because the middle class at its head did not know how to lead the movement.

Comrades! What must we deduce from this? Must we insist on the formula that the colonial bourgeoisie is objectively a revolutionary force, that we have to support it and endeavour to establish contacts with it? This would be a truly ridiculous stand to take. We know that gigantic revolutionary forces exist in India. But due to the fact that the Indian middle class, because of its innate unrevolutionary character, does not give adherence to the ideology of a revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle, and on the other hand, due to the fact that the long period of suppressed economic development has robbed the revolutionary forces of the growth of a proletarian vanguard—they cannot be deployed effectively against Imperialism. It is the task of the Communist International to give the gigantic revolutionary forces the leadership they lack, to give the kind of leadership, the lack of which was the reason that the revolutionary forces could not grow into a mighty threat to Imperialism.

Further, comrades, we should look at the assertion that, as the policy of Imperialism consists of preventing a free growth of the productive energy in the colonies, there would be conflict between the colonial bourgeoisie and the imperialist bourgeoisie. In general that is true, but lately it has become less true. The economic policy of Imperialism and especially of British Imperialism has undergone a fundamental change. I shall deal with this particular phase of this economic policy. Objectively, the colonial middle class has to fight Imperialism due to this conflict. Herein lies the revolutionary significance of the colonial middle class, and in so far as it possesses this revolutionary significance, we must support the national middle class. However, the question arises here: How shall we support it? We can make resolutions; but such resolutions will be of no practical aid whatever. We can express our sympathy; such sympathy, however, does not mean support for it. We can issue proclamations but these proclamations will not be published in its newspapers because, even if we offer our aid, we are not trusted. We, therefore, must find a practical way. We have seen that it cannot lead the struggle against Imperialism because it does not wish to head a revolutionary mass movement. It lacks a revolutionary perspective in regard to the development of the revolutionary movement. The colonial middle class is very closely tied to the enervated feudal system and connected to a high degree with the capitalistic large landowners. It, therefore, is not even in favour of the classical middle-class programme which demands the abolition of large landholdings. It means that it does not even desire the destruction of the feudal system. This reactionary social composition and attitude of the bourgeoisie does not even permit the development of a more radical revolutionary theory. It is not even capable of bringing together the revolutionary energies of the masses in a purely bourgeois revolution as their class comrades in European countries. It is separated from the masses. It is not in a position and does not even desire to mobilize the masses for the struggle against Imperialism. It fears any kind of mass action and places its hopes on constitutional methods.

Here we can let it have real support. We must mobilize the workers and peasants and lead this organized revolutionary army to support the national middle class in its struggle against Imperialism. That would be the practical way to strengthen the national liberation movement. Hence, we do not need to establish a programme of direct contact between the (Comintern) Executive and the nationalists, but to organize our own political apparatus, by means of which the national movement is led by revolutionary forces and saved from the perils of compromise deals. We must mobilize the revolutionary forces in every country and bring into being this revolutionary army, which will fight shoulder to shoulder with the nationalist middle class as long as the latter is prepared to fight Imperialism. This tactic will even give us the opportunity to impel the middle class into battle against Imperialism.

The reason for the nationalist bourgeoisie being prepared to make compromises is because it is timid. In itself it is very weak. On the other hand, it does not wish to release the revolutionary energy of the masses. However, when it seems that there is an organized revolutionary force which can be utilized in a fight against Imperialism, it will adopt a bolder stand. It will make progressive demands. The conflict with the foreign middle classes and Imperialism will thereby intensify and the otherwise insignificant revolutionary importance of the colonial bourgeoisie will bear with greater effect on the situation. This can only come about if we have a party of our own in these countries. If we have a party in every colony and semi-colonial country, which will be a party of the labourers and peasants and will mobilize the workers and peasants on the basis of class interests and at the same time place separation from the Empire and national independence at the top of its programme, then we will have reached the goal of developing in the colonies a revolutionary struggle. In this way the Communist International will bring real aid to the national liberation movement.

Now, comrades, a few words on the new policy and tactics of Imperialism. If we wish to battle the enemy successfully, then we must follow all his manoeuvres with close attention. No foreign power, no matter how strong it may be, can keep a great nation constantly subjugated if it has not been able to gain support from a particular social strata of that suppressed nation. Naturally, the imperialists always endeavour to win over the most advanced (social) class of the subjugated people. If we examine history, we will find that this has always been the secret of imperialist domination. In this way Imperialism holds the subjugated people in its claws. In every country, Imperialism allies itself with a specific social class. In some countries, it allies itself with the feudal-aristocratic class, in others with the patriarchal feudal class, and in still others with the intellectuals, etc., etc. The alliance depends upon the prevailing social conditions and the exigencies of Imperialism. As the social development progresses in the colonies, so new social elements come to the fore and replace the past leaders of the nation. Imperialism, in order to survive, therefore needs the support of these elements. It has to win them over in order to extend the social basis of Imperialism. This occurs in the most important colonies which are right under the heel of Imperialism and which form the most important basis of colonial policy.

In some colonies, indigenous capitalism has grown to significant proportions. It is correct that due to this growth the conflict between the native and foreign bourgeoisie has intensified. This problem has also another aspect. The disparity between the classes, too, within the indigenous society has intensified. This leads to dissatisfaction of the masses. This primitive expression of class contrasts, together with the dissatisfaction which is a cause of the war, creates the basis for an acute national movement. Formerly, the national movement was limited to the narrow group of intellectuals and the lower middle classes. After the war it spread throughout the whole country. The bourgeoisie placed itself at the head of this discontent without comprehending its character. By exploiting the strength of this mass rebellion, it established the demands of its own class. Imperialism, however, lost no time in splitting the national front by granting concessions to the colonial capital.

The serious crisis of world capitalism has also forced Imperialism to adopt this new policy. In Egypt as in India this policy had a remarkable effect. The middle-class leaders of the national movement turned against the masses of people participating in it. They rejected all revolutionary mass action and reverted to the old methods of constitutional opposition. Hence, the national movement has collapsed even in India where it had reached enormous strength. In India there is an advanced middle class, and capitalism has grown further than in any other colonial country. Yet the bourgeoisie has openly abandoned its programme in regard to separation from the Empire. In reality it never had such a programme. The national bourgeoisie stood in favour of a 'Federation of the Empire' (Reichsfoederation). Why? Because the new economic policy of Imperialism aimed at the industrialization of the colonies. It is this that the national bourgeoisie is currently demanding. It will be completely reconciled with Imperialism as soon as it has been granted certain political rights.

I have here a memorandum submitted by the delegation of the Indian National movement. It contains the demands of the Indian bourgeoisie. If the demands are met, the Indian bourgeoisie would be satisfied. According to this memorandum, the British Viceroy shall have supremacy in India, the military control shall remain in the hands of the British Government, as well as the running of foreign affairs. What does that mean? It means that the Indian middle class wants the protection of the Empire. Why shall military control remain in the hands of the British Government? Simply because the Indian bourgeoisie knows that the real reason for the dissatisfaction of the masses is not based on national sentiment but that this dissatisfaction has a more profound economic character. The masses are not rebelling against a national exploitation but against the exploitation by the capitalists and wealthy landowners. The Indian middle classes and the wealthy landowners, the whole of the proprietary class prefer to develop slowly under the protection of Imperialism rather than run the risk of a revolution where they are surrounded by so much inflammable material. Indian society is facing acutely the possibility of a gigantic class struggle. In the face of this peril the Indian bourgeoisie runs straight into the arms of British Imperialism and will not, if necessary, hesitate to creep under the throne of King George.

The class differences outweigh national antagonism. In view of the revolutionary masses, the bourgeoisie has closed its ranks and forgets, at least for a time, all its differences. I do not have the time to show that this process is in some measure in progress in all colonial countries. If you take the trouble to investigate the material on this matter, you will see that I may well be right.

The point I wish to deal with next, comrades, is that of our behaviour in the colonies which have been granted a sham independence. Egypt may serve as an example. No middle class party of any colonial country used such high-sounding revolutionary phraseology as the Egyptian Nationalists. Zaglul was incarcerated as a dangerous revolutionary and spoke in highly revolutionary terms. It is a fact, too, that the Egyptian peasantry and the Egyptian people recognized Zaglul as their leader. Now we see Zaglul heading the Egyptian government. What is going on there? We have relevant reports from our English comrades full of interesting details which I cannot deal with because of lack of time. Briefly, matters stand thus: Zaglul, who came to power by exploiting the national sentiment of the masses, has, since succeeding in this, suppressed the labour movement. As you know the whole Central Committee of Egypt's Communist Party is in gaol where they are treated worse than common criminals.* They are accused of plotting against the sovereignty of the King.

Comrades! I do not believe that any one of us is under the illusion that the national bourgeoisie, when it gains power, will treat us any better than the imperialist bourgeoisie. Matters, however, are such that if we do not make preparations in advance, we will get into the same position in other countries as we are now in Egypt. The entire peasantry and working class support the national movement without, from the outset, demanding any protection for themselves and then, when the bourgeoisie has gained power, they find themselves in a defenceless position. None of us can assert today that the fact that Zaglul has come to power means the liberation of the Egyptian people. The majority of Egyptians find themselves in the same position as before. Their economic situation has not changed in the slightest and they possess no political rights. The few political rights granted by Imperialism were given to the upper classes of the bourgeoisie and the reactionary wealthy landowners in order to make them into compliant tools of Imperialism. The fact that a so-called national government exists does, therefore, not mean that the national struggle for liberation has reached its goal. This goal has not been reached and the fight has to be carried on until Imperialism has truly been overthrown and until the Egyptian people is in fact liberated. Who will liberate the Egyptian people? Not Zaglul, although he occasionally speaks against British Imperialism, but who is generally satisfied with the position he has reached.

Conflict between the Egyptian upper classes and British Imperialism could arise over the share each party may have in the exploitation process. This conflict, however, does not have any revolutionary foundation. We must, therefore, continue our liberation war and organize the peasantry. Only the labourers of Egypt can carry on the fight. It is true that the Egyptian proletariat is in its infancy, it is numerically weak, but history is calling on it to play a revolutionary part. Once the workers and peasants have been organized into a party of their own, they can at any time form an alliance with other exploited social elements who are not satisfied with the present state of compromise and who are willing to fight.

Here we come again to the same question: What stance shall we adopt towards the governing bourgeoisie? We shall support the governing bourgeoisie in its demands against Imperialism, but we shall also promote our policy according to the interests of the working class. Our tactics must force the indigenous bourgeoisie to put forth increased demands and to make greater inroads into the sphere of power of Imperialism. In a word, we must prevent the fight for independence from being sacrificed on the altar of compromise between the native middle class and the imperialists.

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* In 1923 the Socialist Party of Egypt accepted the 21 conditions of the Comintern Statute and changed its name to the Communist Party of Egypt. It had about 700 members, but the leaders were arrested which totally immobilized the party. SNR

Further, I wish to say a few words about the relationship of the Russian revolution to the liberation movements in the countries of the east. It is a very extensive and significant matter. But here, too, we do not see things in their correct proportion. The effect of the Russian revolution on the various eastern countries shapes itself according to the social and economic conditions in these countries. In countries such as India, for instance, where the middle class is strongly developed, we find the nationalists hold a distinct loathing for the Russian revolution. This attitude grows more acute in proportion to the influence of the Russian revolution felt among the masses.

The Indian Nationalists do not regard the programme of the Russian revolution (in) any friendlier (terms) than the nationalists in Europe. We find, however, a latent sympathy among the mass of the people because the programme of the Russian revolution naturally is directed to the masses. If we, therefore, wish to utilize the great moral influence the Russian revolution has had on the peoples of the east, we arrive at the same problem. We must reach those social classes who naturally and logically can be inspired by the successes of the programme of the Russian revolution.

Finally, comrades, I have to say that at the conclusion of the debate and after we possess sufficient information on this very complex as well as very important question, we must focus on it from a practical policy point of view. I have given only a sweeping outline. It will be necessary to examine the conditions in each country in order to establish which social class is the most revolutionary in the respective country so as to make contact with this social class and in this manner to rally the entire people and to support it in its struggle against Imperialism. If we do not consider the problem from this viewpoint, we will make no headway at all. If our national sections are not given a specific task through analysis of the practical side of the problem, then we will again be forced at the next Congress to direct criticism against our different national sections, that they have done nothing about the colonial question. However, then we will have to concede that it is not the particular fault of or neglect by one of the national sections.

Comrades! The revolt of the colonies will perhaps play the deciding part in the question of global revolution.* The organization of this revolt is therefore a most important task of the Communist International. The only way to fulfil this great historical task is through the organization of the exploited classes to become the revolutionary popular parties of the people.*

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* In Roy's original draft at the Second Congress, Thesis 4 stated: 'Without the breaking

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up of the colonial empire, the overthrow of the capitalist system in Europe does not appear possible'. Presumably at Lenin's instance, this formulation was then altered to read: 'The breaking up of the colonial empire, together with the proletarian revolution in the home country, will overthrow the capitalist system in Europe'. See *Selected Works of M. N. Roy* Vol. I. pp. 166, 175. SNR

* The Wafd Party was founded in 1919 by Saad Zaglul Pasha as the nationalist party of Egypt. In the *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* (No. 13, 17 January 1923) Roy had attacked Zaglul as a 'centrist' who wanted a '*modus vivendi* with British imperialism.' When the Wafd Party won the elections Zaglul Pasha, brought back from exile by the British, formed the government in January 1924 with himself as Prime Minister. In the spring of 1924 there were strikes in Cairo. Zaglul's government banned the Communist Party of Egypt and arrested its leaders. Eleven communists were given sentences ranging from six months' to three years' imprisonment. The Comintern's line was equivocal. At the Fifth Congress, Manuilsky, replying to Roy's criticism, 'grappled unconvincingly with the paradox that Zaglul's rise to power had taken place with the consent of the British government, and was yet a progressive event'. (E. H. Carr, *Socialism in one Country 1924–1926*, Penguin, 1972, Vol. 3, p. 667).

In September 1924 Zaglul went to London for negotiations with the British government. But the fall of the Labour government in Britain and the installation of the Conservatives led to Zaglul's resignation in November, Zaglul's successor Ziwar continued the policy of suppression and persecution of the Communists in Egypt. At Zaglul's death in 1927 he was described in Soviet periodicals as a 'great anti-imperialist'.

For the Russian version of Roy's speech at the Fifth Congress, *Piatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress K.I.*, Part I, pp. 604–11. SNR

Salute to Clara Zetkin*

ROY (India): Comrades! I wish to express the sentiments of all present here when I say that we consider ourselves happy to congratulate our beloved comrade, Clara Zetkin, on her birthday.

She is able to show a magnificent record of fighting in defence of the working classes. Her name is linked with many historical deeds and with the advance of the working class. It is truly a great pleasure to see her in our midst even in these days of the last stage of the proletarian revolution. As we wish her well on her sixty-fifth birthday, we all hope that we will have this pleasure for many more years. We all hope that she will be still living among us when the goal, for which she has fought her whole life, has been reached. The Congress salutes this old courageous fighter of the proletariat of the world and wishes sincerely that she will be in our midst when it meets to celebrate the constitution of the Soviet Union of the world.

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* Clara Zetkin belonged to the Old Guard of the German Communist Party and had been a close associate of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. An active feminist, she was in charge of the Berlin section of the International Women's Secretariat (founded 1920) and was editor of *Die Kommunistische Fraueninternationale* (1921–25). At the Fifth Comintern Congress, she tried bravely to defend Radek and Brandler against Zinoviev's attack, but when the Old Guard of the German Party was removed and replaced she quietly submitted to the new dispensation. On behalf of the Presidium Roy was chosen to express the appreciation of the Comintern on her sixty-fifth birthday. In the early twenties there was much tension and conflict between Moscow and Berlin over control and policy of the Women's Secretariat. 'In April 1926, the International Women's Secretariat was abolished and replaced by a Women's department of the Comintern Executive'. (Carr, *Socialism in One Country 1924–1926*, London, 1972 Vol. 3, p. 1024). Clara Zetkin died in Moscow in 1934.

This short speech was given on 5 July. *Protokoll*, II. p. 871. SNR

'I decline to speak'*

ROY (India): Comrades! I have requested to speak because Comrade Manuilski informed the Committee that he was instructed by the Central Committee of the KPR to criticize my point of view. I desired to speak to defend my standpoint. But now, the chair has reversed the order (of speakers): I shall speak first, then Comrade Manuilski. In these circumstances I decline to speak. I have nothing to add to my original report. I therefore wish to confine myself to inform the Congress—in case I am not given the opportunity to reply to the criticism which Comrade Manuilski will apply to my viewpoint—that I do not wish to hold the floor at this point.

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* That differences over the National and Colonial Question were far from removed, despite behind-the-scenes discussions and manoeuvres, became evident at the last session on 8 July. Knowing that Manuilski in his concluding speech would attack him, Roy demanded the right of reply. He was granted permission to speak for fifteen minutes, but on condition that he agreed to speak *before* Manuilski and not after him. Roy refused to do so. However, after Manuilski's attack on Roy for his 'nationalen Nihilismus', no resulution on the National and Colonial Question was moved or passed by the Congress. *Protokoll*, Vol. II, p 999. Five draft resolutions on the National and Colonial question were referred to the Fourth Plenum of the ECCI which at its sitting on 12 July referred them to the Presidium. SNR

Selections from

The Vanguard

Vol V, 1924

Mahatmaji and Bolshevism, 15 October 1924
Appeal to the Nationalists, 15 December 1924

Mahatmaji and Bolshevism*

Some of his American friends wrote to Mahatma Gandhi that in the name of religion he was probably introducing bolshevism into India. These gratuitous 'friends', obviously taking their cue from the spokesmen of Anglo-Saxon imperialism (who often masquerade as pacifists), depict the revolt of the Moslem peoples as a menace to the world, because this revolt is supported by bolshevik Russia. It should have been very simple for Mahatmaji to give a fitting reply to this impudent communication. He could have told his 'responsible (?) foreign friends' that the Moslem peoples have legitimate reason to revolt, and that any political doctrine or government supporting this revolt is to be considered favourable by all apostles of freedom. Besides, he could have requested his American friends to get busy at home, if they sincerely dreaded any menace to the world. What is menacing the world more today than American imperialism? Is the revolt of the Moslem peoples more sinister than the Ku Klux Klan and the American Legion? Is bolshevist atheism more godless than the anti-Asiatic spirit of the American democracy?

The Mahatma, however, did not give such a direct answer. He preferred to justify himself—to absolve himself from any possible suspicion of bolshevist tendency. But the curious thing is, that although by his own confession he did not know anything about bolshevism, nevertheless he was extremely solicitous to disown any leaning towards it, so sure is his instinctive antipathy for it. In an article in the *Young India* he writes: 'In the first place I must confess that I do not

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* On 21.8.1924 Gandhi wrote an article in his journal *Young India* under the title 'Bolshevism or Discipline?' It was written in response to 'a passionately-worded letter' from 'two American friends' 'saying that in the name of religion I am probably introducing in India Bolshevism which knows no God or morality and is frankly atheistic'. Gandhi admitted that he did 'not know the meaning of Bolshevism', but he also made it clear that his 'movement is not atheistic . . . It has been undertaken in His (God's) name and is being continued with constant prayer . . . It is a process of discipline'.

Roy's article, published in *The Vanguard* of 15 October 1924 (Vol. 5, No. 4), was written in response to Gandhi's explanation. He sent a copy of his article to Gandhi, who reprinted it under the title 'M. N. Roy's Bolshevism' in *Young India* of 1 January 1925, with a brief editorial comment 'Meaning of Bolshevism' in which he stated: 'I can no more tolerate the yoke of Bolshevism than of Capitalism . . . Mobocracy is autocracy multiplied million times'.

Gandhi's original article, reprint of Roy's article and Gandhi's comment are included in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 25, Delhi, 1967, pp. 18–20; 604–608; 531. SNR know the meaning of bolshevism'. This is indeed a very damaging confession, in view of the fact that it is made by one standing at the head of a great popular movement. The Mahatma said in the same article that he knew that there were two opposite pictures of bolshevism, 'one painting it in the blackest colour the other hailing it as a deliverance for the downtrodden masses all over the world'. But he does not know what to believe. Here again he could follow a simple human course. He could easily find out who paints the first picture. It is done by those who are ruling over the world with the policy of blood and iron. In deference to his scruples of impartiality, he might not believe those giving the second picture; but certainly Mahatmaji does not need to be convinced that the first party is not the friend or deliverer of the human race. Therefore, when they depict a thing in the blackest colour, the oppressed section of humanity can instinctively sense some sinister motive, they feel that the 'blackest colour' is for deceiving them. By this unerring instinct, Indian nationalists during the war used to read two German victories in the place of each allied victory cabled by Reuter, and the Mexican peon calls himself proudly a bolshevik, for the simple reason that the American capitalists are so much against bolshevism. But, I suppose the mentality of a Mahatma is too complicated an organism to admit of such a simple instinctive process.

Since the deplorable ignorance of bolshevism is not the Mahatma's alone, but is shared by many in India, and since this ignorance does not preclude them from forming an opinion on the subject, it may not be uncalled for to say a few words about this 'monstrous' doctrine. It is more called for, in view of the fact that bolshevism (which by the way is not the result, as is commonly believed, but the basic principle of the Russian revolution of 1917) is the most dominant political factor of the contemporary world. Just as the great French revolution of 1789 affected the political thought and life of Europe at that epoch, the Russian revolution is bound to play the same role in our time, with the difference that the geographical situation of Russia coupled with the principles of her revolution will bring wider spheres, including Asia and Africa, under its sway. This is the case despite the explicable apprehension and righteous indignation of the pacifically minded ladies and gentlemen, whose good faith is taken for granted by the Mahatma, but is seriously doubted by more practical men of the world.

Now, as far as Mahatmaji is concerned, the main principles of bolshevism will not be anything new. He himself will think so. But principles become a bundle of dead formulas if they are not put into action. By his own declaration, the Mahatma desires to see the masses freed from the domination of capitalism. Well, bolshevism does not propose anything more monstrous. The bolsheviks are generally in agreement with Mahatmaji when he says: 'the greatest menace to the world today is the growing, exploiting, irresponsible imperialism which is threatening the independent existence and expansion of the weaker races'. But the difference between the Mahatmaji and the bolsheviks is that in the hand of the former this gospel of freedom loses all practical value, being subordinated to an intricate conception of morality, religion and god, while the latter do not permit their vision to be clouded by illusions and deal with the world as it is. The result is, that while bolshevism forges ahead, breaking one link after another of the mighty chain of time-honoured servitude, in the face of united and determined opposition of the powers that be, Gandhism gropes in the dark, spinning out ethical and religious dogmas that only prevent the masses from developing the will to fight for freedom.

It can be taken for granted that Mahatmaji is acquainted with the general principles of socialism, not the utopian brand of St Simon, Thomas More, Tolstoy, etc., but that formulated on the basis of scientific knowledge and economic facts by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The principles of socialism are (1) to overthrow the capitalist system of production; (2) abolition of private property; (3) reorganization of the means of social production and distribution on the basis of communal ownership; and (4) transformation of the class-ridden society into a free human fraternity. These are also the principles of bolshevism, the latter being socialism in its militant and initial stages of victory.

The term 'bolshevism', which has come to be associated with bloodshed, destruction, terror and what not, is very harmless in its meaning. It is derived from the Russian word *bolsheviki* which is the synonym for the adherents of the majority. The term was first used when the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party split in 1903 into two factions, on the questions of programme and tactics. The programme and tactics advocated by the majority, led by Lenin together with others, came to be known as bolshevism; and since the Russian proletariat scored the victory in October 1917, having fought according to the programme and tactics advocated by the majority of the party ever since 1903, the October revolution is called a bolshevist victory, which means the first triumph of socialism. What are the concrete results of the Russian revolution? (1) A corrupt, irresponsible despotism was overthrown; (2) the bourgeoisie which under the guise of democracy, sought in conjunction with foreign powers to deprive the Russian masses of the benefits of the revolution was also overthrown; (3) the landed aristocracy, the mainstay of the tsarist despotism, was destroyed, land declared to be the property of the entire nation and distributed among the cultivators; (4) large industries were nationalized; (5) foreign trade made a state monopoly; (6) all legislative and administrative power was transferred to the overwhelming majority of the people, namely the workers, peasants and soldiers, who exercised this power through their councils (soviets); (7) all right to private property and the class privilege accruing therefrom was abolished. These in general are the principles of bolshevism, applied practically in Russia in consequence of the revolution. Now that he knows what bolshevism is, what is the attitude of the Mahatma towards it? It will be interesting for India, as well as the whole world, to know the reply.

Now comes the thorny question. Mahatmaji might not take exception to these principles, but he would certainly make many a stipulation as to the method of realizing them. For him there is only one touchstone for everything. If bolshevism is atheistic, he is against it. That's all. Well, there we have given him a definition of bolshevism in a nutshell. It is for him to pronounce whether it is a negation of god or what. He cannot maintain that it is a negation of god, unless he holds private property and vested interests to be a divine ordinance; because bolshevism is certainly a negation of private property and vested interest, which from the dawn of civilization have been the curse of human society. In the practical programme of bolshevism, there is no question of god or religion. It is neither theistic nor atheistic. It concerns the worldly life of man. The possible conflict with god and religion occurs only when the latter stand in the way, when the conception of god or religion clashes with this practical programme. In that case bolshevism does not hesitate to take up the challenge even of the supposed almighty, and become atheistic, thus running the risk of forfeiting the approbation of the Mahatma. But by doing so, it not only becomes the champion of the material rights of the masses, but holds up as well the torch of intellectual and spiritual emancipation, to dissipate the gloom of ignorance and superstition in which the masses have been kept for ages by the dominating class.

The programme of bolshevism, which Mahatmaji cannot deny to be humanitarian (unless he chooses to take up openly the cause of the upper class), is however not easily put into practice. The reign of terror and devastating civil war that undeniably took place in Russia after the revolution owe their origin to the fact that a brutal resistance was put up to prevent the realization of this programme. Not only the Russian aristocracy and bourgeoisie, who naturally frantically tried to regain their lost position, put up this resistance; they were openly backed by the international bourgeoisie, who saw in the Russian revolution the first breach in their citadel. A part of this ceaseless campaign was the picturing of bolshevism in the darkest colours, which did not altogether fail to impress even the Mahatma. Now what were the bolsheviks to do in that situation? There were two alternatives: call upon the Russian workers and peasants to be god-fearing and meekly slip back into the bondage they had so heroically broken, or to keep on fighting even against god and religion, if they stood in the way, to protect and consolidate the freedom won. Bolshevism was obliged to accept the second alternative, because not only all available material forces were concentrated in order to force the Russian workers and peasants back under the capitalist and tsarist tyranny; all the arms of god and religion were also mobilized for the same purpose. Bolshevism is not a gospel of god; bolshevists are not angels. But neither is bolshevism the spirit of demons. The Mahatma proposes 'to touch the masses through their hearts, their better nature'. It is a fascinating proposition, to which bolshevism would not object, had it been found workable in the practice of liberating the masses from class domination and imperialist oppression. His theory of 'discipline' is also very questionable. It may be good for the spiritual well-being of the masses; but it certainly weakens their will to fight for freedom. All these doctrines about 'heart', 'better nature', 'discipline' and the like have been adumbrated from time immemorial by those who were the (perhaps unconscious) instruments of class domination. Bolshevism does not shirk any task, however disagreeable or difficult it may be. It challenges the existence of god, and denounces all the codes of religion and ethics originating therefrom, because in the struggle for freedom they are all found arrayed on the side of despotism, tyranny and oppression.

Bolshevism is prepared to leave god alone, if he and his agents on earth agree not to meddle in things temporal. But if they do not agree to be satisfied with their supermaterial position and seek to make trouble on earth, bolshevism will preach atheism to liberate the masses from the snare of ignorance woven by religion.

Appeal to the Nationalists*

Fellow Countrymen,

This year the National Congress meets in an atmosphere of depression and decomposition. There remains nothing but a memory of the gigantic movement that swept the country in the years immediately following the Imperialist war. The process of disintegration has touched the bottom. In fact the period has lasted much longer than was expected. The scene at Coconada was sad indeed; but Belgaum promises a worse spectacle.

The nationalist movement is confronted with immense and intricate problems which are not approached from the right angle of vision. In India, as in every other subject country, nationalism is a revolutionary force; it must, therefore, pursue a revolutionary

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* At the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Cocanada (December 1923) presided over by Mohammed Ali, 'the fate of the Council-Boycott was sealed'. (P Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, 1935 edition, p. 442). The Congress permitted the Swarajists to continue as members and officially recognized their work in the Councils as part of the programme of non-cooperation. In February 1924 Gandhi was released on the ground of illness. His differences with the Swarajists were publicly aired in the form of a statement by Gandhi and a counter-statement by C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru. In September-October Gandhi went on a fast as a penance for the outbreak of Hindu-Muslim riots. Confronted with the Government's severely repressive measures which included arrests of the Swarajists on a large scale, he reached an agreement with the Swarajists under which non-cooperation was to be abandoned as a National Programme (except for the boycott of foreign cloth). 'In exchange for this Congress members must give 2,000 yards of hand-spun yarn monthly, instead of the annual subscription of annas four'. (Sitaramayya, p. 467). Gandhi presided over the annual session of the Congress at Belgaum (December 1924) where he explained the reasons for the withdrawal of non-cooperation and his '12-point scheme of Swaraj', and he declared that he 'would strive for Swaraj within the Empire'.

Roy addressed his 'Appeal to the Nationalists' on 1 December; it was published as a Supplement to *The Vanguard* of 15 December 1924. It reached his contacts in India in time for them to reprint it with some alterations as a leaflet and distribute copies at the Belgaum Congress. Copies of *The Vanguard* and its Supplement were intercepted and the reprint copies made at Bombay were seized by the police. Roy now changed the name of *The Vanguard* to *The Masses of India*; it was converted into a monthly and published from Paris. In *The Masses*, Roy characterized the Belgaum session as marking 'the demise of the Congress'. Gandhi's Presidential Address 'was an airy mausoleum to a ghostly memory' (*The Masses*, I, 1 Jauanry 1925). According to Roy, 'it is frankly the Swaraj for the two per cent that the Mahatma stood for at Belgaum. Nowhere in the 12 points of the Mahatma does a single sentence occur which is calculated to demand something in behalf of the masses' (*The Masses*, 1, 2–3, February-March 1925). SNR course. Otherwise it is bound to degenerate either into political reformism, on the one hand, or social reaction, on the other. This has unfortunately been the case in India. Except during the short period of militant Non-Cooperation the Indian nationalist movement has never proceeded along a revolutionary path. Since direct mass action, envisaged in the original programme of Non-Cooperation, was repudiated at Bardoli, the nationalist movement, as represented and guided by the Congress, has been switched off the revolutionary road. The consequence has been a great confusion in the nationalist ranks. Demoralization followed confusion. A process of decomposition set in. The mighty Congress organization was torn by internal conflicts, and killed by the want of exhilarating action. A continued state of depression and inaction drove one section of the nationalists back towards the old and discredited constitutionalism; the more restless elements reverted to futile terrorism, which they had temporarily deserted in quest of a broader field of political activity; deprived of political significance, the orthodox non-cooperators sank into social reaction; while the masses began to lose enthusiasm for the nationalist movement.

The nation is as far away from Swaraj as it stood five years ago; only the hopes and illusions, that inspired it then, are gone today. The situation was no better a year ago; but the Coconada Congress signally failed to repair it. The Belgaum Congress meets in the same gloomy atmosphere but under no better leadership, with no clearer vision, actuated by no revolutionary zeal. It obviously has but one purpose: to draw a curtain over the revolutionary events of the post-war years—to bring the nationalist movement back on the safe and sane road of constitutional agitation. Of course there will be no lack of bombastic speeches, meant only to cover the retreat.

A recapitulation of the trend of the principal events of the past twelve months will show that the mythical goddess of unity, whom the Belgaum Congress will enshrine, signifies only a great political reaction.

(1) The Congress-split ended in a complete victory of the pro-change elements. The Swaraj Party became the predominating political factor. All projects of direct action were disowned by the responsible spokesmen of all political tendencies.

(2) The first act of the Swarajists upon entering the councils was to seek alliance with the independent nationalists, that is, the left wing of the liberals. This alliance could be had only at the sacrifice of the cardinal points of the Swarajist programme.

(3) The famous 'national demands' were put away.

(4) Even the immediate grant of dominion status was not made the *sine qua non* of the nationalist programme.

(5) There is not one political party in the country which will not be satisfied with such measures of reform as provincial autonomy, Indianization of the services and partial responsibility of the central government. Even the Swarajist leaders have clearly committed themselves to this beggarly programme of liberalism.

(6) The Swarajist tactics of parliamentary obstruction have reached the end of their rope. The sponsors of these tactics, who spoke so heroically when engaged in the fight against the no-changers, have failed to carry their policy of resistance outside the council-chambers. In the parliamentary bout, the government held its autocratic position, throwing challenge after challenge insolently to the nationalists. At last the Swarajists were forced to make their choice between revolutionary direct action and reversion to impotent constitutionalism. They have decided in favour of the latter, as we predicted at their birth, and are seeking the alliance of the liberal cooperators and loyal ministerialists.

(7) The no-change wing of the Congress, on the other hand, has lost all political significance. Their only stock-in-trade was civil disobedience, which however they could not put into practice because of the reactionary cult of non-violence. Their political impotency can no longer be hidden behind the cry of pure Gandhism, when the prophet himself throws overboard his programme of triple boycott to welcome Mrs Besant and her followers back into the Congress fold. The fate of the Belgaum Congress will be predetermined in the caucus conference of Bombay which, under the guidance of such a devoted imperialist as Mrs Besant, will eliminate the line of demarcation between cooperation and Non-Cooperation.

(8) Hindu-Moslem unity, which was made a cornerstone of the Non-Cooperation movement, and to the realization of which unity India's fitness for Swaraj was mistakenly attributed by the nationalist leaders themselves, has been revealed to have been a superficial makeshift. The disastrous effects of hinging a great political movement of an essentially revolutionary character on religious fanaticism and extra-territorial patriotism are manifest today in the communal riots which spread all over the country and assume ever uglier forms, despite the frantic efforts of the leaders to check them. The nationalist leaders of both the communities have miserably failed to grasp the problem, much less to solve it.

(9) The decomposed state of the movement, coupled with the thinly-veiled anxiety of the leaders for a compromise made the government so sure of its position that it decided to deal the last crushing blow. It was aimed at those nationalists who were suspected of the least revolutionary tendency. The nationalist movement as a whole was staggered by this unexpected blow and proved unwilling and in-

capable of retaliating. On the contrary, the governmental terrorism in Bengal stampeded the Swarajists into an unholy alliance with the moderates. Some of the best elements of the nationalist ranks are locked up in jail by a despotic ukase, without provoking any determined resistance on the part of the Congress. This speaks for the character of the leadership and the lamentable impotency into which the nationalist movement has sunk in consequence of its non-revolutionary orientation and reformist policy.

This brief review of the situation shows which way the wind is blowing. The progress has been positively retrograde. The preparations of the last year have brought the Congress on the eve of resuming the old programme of evolutionary nationalism from which, under the pressure of popular revolt, it broke away in 1920. At this juncture it is the duty of the revolutionary nationalists to mark out a new way which will lead to the goal of freedom.

The present deplorable state of the nationalist movement is due to a wrong conception of nationalism. Our leaders are no less afraid of and hostile to a revolutionary movement than the British government, although they stand at the head of a movement essentially revolutionary. Taking their cue from the government, not a few of the nationalist leaders energetically denounce what they call 'revolutionary crime'. It is a current topic in the nationalist press that the government should concede the constitutional demands of the nationalists, if the country is to be saved from a violent revolution. This all goes to show that nationalism is considered to be anti-revolutionary, and this narrow conception of nationalism is the root-cause of the weakness of the nationalist movement.

Revolution is not an unconstitutional affair. In fact practically all the modern constitutional states owe their origin to some sort of a revolution. India has no constitutional government. When one talks of constitution in India, one has in view the British constitution. This latter has for its foundation the Magna Carta, which was not secured without the application of force, that is, which was the product of a revolution. Then every successive period in the evolution of the British constitution is equally marked by events of a revolutionary nature. The same process can be read in the history of any other modern nation.

What is revolution? A very wrong notion about it obtains in Indian nationalist circles. Revolution is generally associated with bombs, revolvers and secret societies. Hence arises the expression 'revolutionary crime' so current in Indian political terminology. Revolution, however, is a much greater affair. An important historical event which marks the close of a given historical period and opens up a new one is called a revolution. Since the social factors, economic classes and political institutions, that used to be benefited by the state of affairs obtaining in the closing period, would not permit a change which spells the end of their domination, often their total annihilation, without a fierce resistance, political violence and social convulsion are usually the features of the historical phenomenon which is called 'revolution'. The forces that go into the making of the new epoch are originally conceived and go on gathering strength within the framework of the old which eventually must burst if the germs of the new contained therein are to fully fructify. This process is to be noticed throughout all the physical existence. Revolution, therefore, is in the very nature of things; it is quite constitutional.

Once we have this correct conception of revolution, it becomes clear that nationalism, in a given period of history, is a revolutionary force, whose manifestations are not 'criminal'. This force operates through a series of historical events, which will separate the India of tomorrow from the India of yesterday. This process cannot take place within the framework of a superimposed constitution, which by its very nature is meant to prevent this epoch-making break. Indian nationalism cannot therefore be 'constitutional'. Its object is to establish a constitutional government of the people, for the people, by the people of India.

The goal of nationalism can never be realized in the way indicated by those who, in unison with the British government, are positively hostile to revolution. The struggle for freedom of a subject people can never be separated from revolution. Freedom will never come as a gift from those who deprived us of it. The people of India must conquer freedom; and the idea of conquest cannot be separated from the necessity of breaking down the resistance of the opponent. The nationalists, who prescribe safe and sane 'constitutional' methods, are quite conscious of the resistance that has to be met. They are even doubtful if that resistance can ever be broken by the means advocated by them. Nevertheless they recoil from visualizing the operation of those forces that alone can break down this resistance. Presumably they are not particularly in love with imperialism; but they are not prepared to countenance the social convulsion which will inevitably occur if those forces are let loose. This non-revolutionary nationalism leads to compromise, because it lacks the power to go further.

No less futile is sporadic terrorism carried on by secret societies. Those who resort to the futility of this extremism possess an equally wrong conception of revolution. Violence is not *per se* an essential attribute of revolution. Under the present state of society, political and social revolutions can hardly be expected to be bloodless and non-violent; but everything bloody and violent is not revolutionary. A particular social system or political institution can never be overthrown by assassinating individuals upholding them. It is no more possible to win national independence by killing a number of officials than by a series of reforms acts passed by the British parliament. One method is as impotent as the other, because none of them strikes at the root of the evil. Both are political blunders; but it is preposterous to call the terrorists 'revolutionary criminals', as the 'constitutionalists' are positively non-revolutionary, and will become counter-revolutionaries as soon as the fateful moment comes.

These considerations are necessary to find a way out of the present depression to insure that the 'unity' to be realized at Belgaum causes a reaction among the revolutionary nationalists. The forces that make for militant nationalism having for its object not a mere administrative readjustment, but the introduction of a new historical epoch through a great socio-political convulsion, cannot find adequate expression in the programme of reformism on which narrow basis the 'reunited' Congress will take its stand. Nor can the political potentiality of those forces be asserted through secret terrorist organization. They must find their expression through an organized political party, the appearance of which will break the deadlock and begin a new phase in the nationalist struggle.

What are these forces? They are the rebellious masses, which in the aftermath of the war asserted themselves so overwhelmingly upon the political situation that the Congress was forced to break away from its traditional non-revolutional moorings. When we recollect the Amritsar Congress, it becomes evident that the reluctant adoption of the programme of perfunctory Non-Cooperation at Calcutta by no means signified a radical change in the political orientation of the Congress leadership. In his letter to the Viceroy in June 1920, Gandhi wrote that he still believed in the 'superiority of the British constitution and, therefore, advised disobedience' obviously until the justice of that constitution should cease to be denied to India. How far remote from the revolutionary social forces, that made the Non-Co-operation campaign possible, was the leadership that was actuated by such sentiments! The collapse of the campaign was predestined, and the retrograde process subsequent to the collapse is but logical. But the period between Amritsar and Belgaum cannot be eliminated. It has had its role, and the experience gained during that period will aid the development of the movement of the future. The lesson of that period is: (1) the nationalist movement can become really powerful only when it is based upon the direct action of the revolutionary masses; and (2) divorced from the mass energy, the nationalist movement is bound to sink into depression and decomposition. The tactics of the future, therefore, must be determined in the light of this lesson.

Revolutionary nationalists! We appeal to you not to forget this lesson of history, at this critical moment when the Congress seeks a readjustment of its policy. The political clash and social convulsion, which must precede the successful termination of the national struggle, are dreaded by the upper classes. They are eager to avoid them; therefore, they are averse to invoking the revolutionary energy of the masses in the national struggle. But this shortsighted policy prejudices even their own interests; because experience has shown that imperialism will not yield an inch of ground without resistance. This determined resistance of imperialism, which wields a tremendous power, can be broken down neither by parliamentary strategy nor by futile terrorism. The success of the nationalist movement demands the mobilization of the national energy. The entire nation must be hurled against the stone wall of imperialism. A programme of reformism, which will be adopted by the 'reunited' Congress at Belgaum, cannot accomplish the task. The causes that created the revolutionary ferment of the post-war years have not been eliminated. The masses are still discontented with their condition and will readily rise in revolt to free themselves from unbearable exploitation. This revolt must be organized and led.

As against the reformism of the upper-class politicians, there must be a programme of revolutionary nationalism. This programme demands more than heroic words expressing noble sentiments. It should be prepared with realism. The government is no more afraid of threatening speeches than of bombs and revolvers. They may be zealous to suppress both for the sake of precious prestige; but they do not take them seriously. The unanimous protest of the entire nation against the Bengal arrests failed to make any impression upon the authorities. Why? Because they knew that there was no desire on the part of the nationalists to translate their protests into action; that they were not prepared to back up their threats by action. Under the present condition of the country, despotic actions of the government can be retaliated only by direct mass action— general strike and nonpayment of taxes. But this direct action presupposes two conditions, namely a political party commanding the confidence of the masses and a revolutionary outlook on the part of the nationalists. Neither of these conditions unfortunately exists at this moment. These conditions must be created before the nationalist movement can be carried further ahead.

That party alone can command the lasting confidence of the masses, which not in word but in deed reflects the grievances and demands of the masses. Here again realism should be the guiding principle. The everyday material needs, immediate economic demands and general earthly well-being should be the determining factors. Metaphysical prejudices should be set aside. Then nationalists, who will gather under the banner of such a party, must be inspired with a revolutionary outlook; because mass energy once aroused and applied to a political struggle will not subside as soon as the foreign government is overthrown. It is bound to go to the extent of effecting a radical transformation of the present socio-economic system. The choice has to be made between this revolutionary readjustment of social relations and continued imperialist domination, brutally naked or eventually camouflaged as partnership in the empire.

The programme of a revolutionary nationalist party, which will stand on the solid foundation of mass energy consciously asserting itself for the realization of a concrete goal, must have for its cardinal points the following :

(1) National independence: complete break from the empire; a democratic republic based on universal suffrage;
(2) abolition of feudalism and landlordism;
(3) nationalization of land: none but the cultivator will have the right of landholding;
(4) modernization of agriculture by state aid;
(5) nationalization of mines and public utilities;
(6) development of modern industries;
(7) protection for the workers; minimum wage; eight-hour day; abolition of child-labour; insurance; and other advanced social legislation;
(8) free and compulsory primary education;
(9) freedom of religion and worship;
(10) right of minorities.

A movement for the realization of these concrete objects will be a really national movement. The time is gone when the people could be inspired by a vague promise of Swaraj. The depression of the nationalist movement has been caused by the temporary cooling of mass energy. Had the latter been in the same high-tide as in 1920, the Congress would have been pushed in a revolutionary path against its will. The only way of cutting its projected retreat will be to rekindle the fire, which by no means is dead. A vigorous agitation on the basis of the above programme, which by the way is perfectly 'constitutional', will infuse new life in the movement.

Revolutionary nationalists! Your days have come. Don't let the faith in the 'sincerity' and wisdom of the leaders mislead you any longer. There is no reason to question the sincerity of the leaders; but the wisdom of the last years' politics is certainly open to doubt. What sort of wisdom is that which counsels a retreat having sabotaged the movement? What happened to those gigantic forces that 'brought the mightiest government on its knees'. They were dissipated, misled, abused and finally betrayed. The Congress leadership is to be held responsible for this calamity. This leadership has thoroughly discredited itself. Its non-revolutionary proclivities make it constitutionally unfit for the great role thrust upon it. The movement cries for a new leadership with a bolder spirit and broader vision. You, revolutionary nationalists, are called upon by history to give this leadership. 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!'

Brave patriots! Don't waste your energy in futile terrorism. Your noble idealism and undaunted spirit demand a much wider field of action. The organism of a society, subjugated and exploited for centuries, is surcharged with inflammable materials which, once ignited by a revolutionary leadership, will shatter the chain of slavery. The dynamic outburst of social forces is much more powerful than bombs. The revolutionary action of the toiling masses will free India. Let us organize and lead this action.

The stuggle of the Indian people for freedom is an integral part of the struggle of the international proletariat against capitalist domination, in that its success will break down one of the strongholds of world capitalism. The revolutionary nationalists of India should, therefore, not only join hands with the Indian workers and peasants, but should establish close relations with the advanced proletariat of the world. In this age of monopolist imperialism, the subject peoples in their struggle for freedom must have the cooperation of the international organization of the revolutionary proletariat. The communists will fight side by side with the revolutionary nationalists and will be found always in the front ranks.

1 December 1924 THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA*

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* In view of the Kanpur Conspiracy Case judgement, the reprint of the 'Appeal' which was made at Bombay and distributed as a leaflet at the Belgaum session of the Congress made a few alterations in the text of the appeal. Instead of the Communist Party of India the leaflet ended with the words: 'Fraternally Yours, M. N. Roy'. It carried the name of the printer, K. N. Joglekar at the Labour Press, Bombay, and the publishers, Janaki Prasad Bagerhatta and Arjunlal Sethi, members of the AICC. To the reprint version the publishers added the following note: 'Dear Readers, A mass party for the emancipation from the general exploitation is now overdue. And we expect that the suggestions made above by M. N. Roy will offer sufficient food for thinking minds'. This note and the alterations saved the printer and publishers from prosecution. We have reproduced here the original *Vanguard* text. SNR

SELECTED WORKS
1924–25

10. From *The Communist International*.
11. From *The Masses of India* Vol. I
12. From *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation*.
13. From *The Masses of India* Vol. I.

Who Will Lead*

Class Differentiation in the Indian Revolutionary Movement

'The Party of the Cadets is an ephemeral and lifeless Party. This statement may seem paradoxical at a moment when the Cadets are achieving brilliant victories in the elections, when they are standing on the threshold of probably even more brilliant parliamentary victories- . . . The Cadets are not a Party, but a symptom. They are not a political force, but foam rising from the clash of fighting forces mutually more or less counter-balanced. . . Indeed, they are composed of garrulous, boasting, self-satisfied, narrow-minded and cowardly bourgeois intelligentsia. . . .'

Lenin wrote these words after the Revolution of 1905, when the Cadets were rising in power. History has borne out the prophetic nature of these words. In studying the history of the Indian revolutionary struggle, we find it very instructive to draw an analogy between the Swaraj Party and the Cadets as depicted by Lenin. As a matter of fact, the political character and social composition of the Swaraj Party, which, during the last year and a half, dominated the political stage of India, can be equally characterized by these expressions used by Lenin, in analysing the role of the Cadets in Russia. In the same article Lenin compared the Cadets with worms born out of the decayed carcass of [the] Revolution of 1905, and fattening on that carcass. This rather brutal characterization can also apply to the Swaraj Party—the replica of the Cadets in India. A survey of the genesis and the political accomplishment of the Swaraj Party will justify this historical analogy. This retrospective glance at history is of great importance at this moment, when the Indian movement has reached the end of the period in which it was dominated by petty bourgeois ideology and by the consequent hesitating tactics in spite of its revolutionary mass composition. The lessons learned from the mistakes committed in the past will be greatly helpful in the coming stage of development in which the foundation of the movement is bound to be shifted on to new social classes, necessitating the crystallization of new ideology and new organizational forms.

Lenin said that the Party of the Cadets was the growth on the dead body of the Revolution of 1905. Similarly, the Swaraj Party rose out of the ruins of a great movement which did not reach such a definite revolutionary climax as the Russian Revolution of 1905, but which was undoubtedly the nearest approach to a revolutionary crisis in India. The collapse of the movement of mass passive resistance commonly known as the Non-Cooperation (or Gandhi) movement, led to the crystallization of a certain political tendency which found expression in the Swaraj Party. It was the tendency towards liquidating the revolutionary character of the struggle for freedom and bringing the nationalist movement back to the bourgeois politics of reformism.

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* From *The Communist International*, Greenwood reprint edition, Vol. 9, No. 11, 1924–25, pp. 55–65. SNR

It should be recollected that the movement led by Gandhi did not suffer a defeat at the hands of external forces. It proved itself to be too powerful for the forces of repression. It succumbed under the weight of its internal contradictions, the heterogeneousness of its social composition, and the weakness of its leadership. In 1921 and 1922 the Nationalist movement became so powerful that the government was thrown into a state of panic. For the first time in the history of the Nationalist movement, the masses of the people were involved in it. The government was so much demoralized by the threatening character of the movement that it was on the point of making large concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie, had the latter only had the courage to push a little farther ahead. But this could not be done unless the revolutionary potentialities of the movement were released. The bourgeois leaders, who stood at the head of the movement at that time, however, were not prepared to do this. The threatened overthrow of British imperialism in India, at any rate a serious weakening of its position, was avoided not by a defeat of the Nationalist forces but thanks to the cowardice of the petty bourgeoisie and treachery of the bourgeois intellectuals.

The Non-Cooperation movement was an organized protest against the Reforms of 1919. It embraced all the social elements except those who were directly benefited by the political rights and administrative concessions granted. But these rights and concessions were so insufficient that they touched only a very thin strata of the upper classes—landlords, big capitalists, and higher intellectuals. The object of the British government in granting the Reforms was to split the Nationalist ranks—to separate the big bourgeoisie from the impending mass revolutionary movement, ominous signs of which were already to be noticed in the latter days of the world war. The Reforms were successful in winning over the support of the upper classes; but their failure to meet the demands of the petty bourgeoisie accentuated the discontent of the latter and drove them towards the masses, who were in a state of revolt owing to higher prices and other forms of economic exploitation. These two social classes embraced by far the majority of the entire population. A movement so constituted was sure to be very powerful. In fact it did appear very much so in the beginning. But the cultural backwardness and utter lack of political education on the part of the masses placed the entire movement under petty bourgeois leadership. Consequently, a movement predominated, of mass composition and essentially sustained by the first stages of a gigantic working class revolt, and became the political weapon of the petty bourgeoisie.

The petty bourgeois opposition to the inadequate Reforms was crystallized into a movement to boycott the latter. The concessions made were not broad enough to affect the economic conditions and political disabilities of the middle classes. Therefore, the latter declared their intention not to participate in the reformed administration. Once placed on this basis, the Non-Cooperation movement ceased to consciously express the revolutionary forces on which it was essentially based. The widespread discontent of the masses which encouraged the disgruntled petty bourgeoisie to venture upon a resistance to imperialist autocracy was, however, not to subside because the middle class intellectual leaders failed to give it a militant political form. During the year 1920 and 1921 the entire country was the scene of a powerful strike movement on the one hand and a series of agrarian insurrections on the other. In proportion as the revolutionary forces grew powerful the leaders turned against them. This contradiction between the leadership and the movement led to the collapse of the latter.

The Swaraj Party was the outcome of this collapse. The dissatisfied lower middle class drifted into the turmoil of a revolutionary mass movement without properly appreciating the gravity of the steps they were taking. But the upper strata of the middle classes, which were more consciously actuated by bourgeois idealism, had been from the very beginning aware of the revolutionary potentialities of a movement based upon an acute mass discontent. They knew that a peasant revolt which was imminent on all sides was detrimental to the interests not only of British imperialism but also of native landlordism. They also knew that the rebellious workers employed in the industries could not be mobilized into a movement of national liberation without at the same time becoming conscious of the economic interests of their class, in which case such a movement would be directed as much against British imperialism as against Indian capitalism. Both of these eventualities, namely, an agrarian revolt against native feudalism and a strike movement against capitalism, were odious to those leaders of the Non-Cooperation movement who consciously represented the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie.

The mass movement, which struck terror into the heart of imperialism, was sabotaged, repudiated and finally betrayed by the timid petty bourgeoisie which came under the counter-revolutionary influence of the bourgeoisie in proportion as it went away from the masses. As soon as the petty bourgeoisie committed political suicide, the way was clear for the representatives of the bourgeoisie to liquidate all the revolutionary tendencies in the Nationalist movement. The Swaraj Party gathered under its banner those advanced bourgeois elements who could give a co-ordinated and intelligent expression to the hostility against the revolutionary character of the Nationalist movement. These people began by criticizing the Non-Cooperation programme as 'impracticable'. They argued that the Non-Cooperation movement failed owing to the impracticability of its programme, and concluded that the movement should be given a new programme of 'practical politics'. The collapse of the movement, however, was not due to any weakness of the programme. On the contrary, it was due to the refusal of the leaders to carry out a programme, although not a few of those very leaders subsequently talked wisely about the impracticability of the revolutionary Non-Cooperation programme in order to justify a reversion to reformism.

The Programme of Non-Cooperation was very practical and could be carried out to the great detriment of British Imperialism, had it not been purposely sabotaged by the leaders. It was so practical, that is, it corresponded so much to the objective conditions of the country in that particular epoch, that a very half-hearted propagation of the programme stirred up the masses to a point of revolt. While initiating the campaign for the rejection of the old programme in favour of a new one, C. R. Das (the leader of the Swaraj Party) condemned the Non-Cooperation leaders for having 'bungled and mismanaged the movement when the mightiest government was on its knees'. This was the case in 1921 when the Executive Committee of the Indian National Congress, on which sat practically all the present leaders of the Swaraj Party, repudiated all forms of mass resistance and ordered a general retreat (C. R. Das was in jail at that time). It is true that the Gandhi-ite leaders became terrified by the forces at their command, and called for a retreat when everything was in favour of a vigorous aggressive action. But it is certainly ridiculous to lay the blame of the defeat at the door of the programme when the leaders consciously sabotaged it. The deplorable collapse of the Non-Cooperation movement was indeed the occasion for a new form of struggle with a new ideology and under a new leadership. What was needed was to adopt more aggressive tactics in order to make up for the ground lost by the mistakes committed and not a retreat straight on the grounds of reformism as was advocated by the Swaraj Party.

The programme of Non-Cooperation was to make the administration of the country impossible by withholding all popular support.

No foreign government can exist in a country unless it can count upon a voluntary or involuntary support of a considerable section of the native population. This being the case, it is quite conceivable that the withdrawal of all such support will make the existence of a foreign government impossible. The principle points of the programme of Non-Cooperation were: (1) to boycott the new parliamentary budget set up under the Reforms Act of 1919; (2) to boycott the law courts; (3) to boycott government schools; and (4) to boycott the merchandise imported from Britain. All these items of boycott were preparatory to the climax of the programme—to suspend the payment of taxes and to organize mass-disobedience of all laws. It was indeed a very practical programme. It was a very revolutionary programme as well. If put into effect, it would give political expression to the discontent of the masses. There could be no weapon more suitable for pulling down the political and economic structure of imperialism.

From the very beginning the bourgeois leaders desired to avoid any step that might lead towards this climax. But the Nationalist movement in the post-war period had acquired a predominantly mass character; therefore, slogans embodying the objective demands of the masses could not be totally left out of the programme. Such demands were put forward but in the vaguest possible form. Though nothing definite was ever said as to when and how the 'no tax' campaign would be inaugurated, the very slogan 'non-payment of taxes' was attractive enough for the peasantry, heavily weighed down by all kinds of rents and taxes. The poor and exploited agrarian masses quickly caught on to this revolutionary slogan, and the nationalist movement dangerously approached a serious revolutionary crisis. This was enough to satisfy the petty bourgeois intellectuals who immediately changed their position. The cardinal point of the new programme was parliamentary obstruction. The plan was to present a series of demands as soon as the Nationalists would be returned to the parliamentary bodies in a majority. Should the government refuse to grant these demands, a policy of indiscriminate parliamentary obstruction would be undertaken in order to make the administration of the country impossible. On the face of it, this programme sounded very radical. It created new illusions for the petty bourgeois intellectuals, smarting in a prolonged state of inactivity caused by the collapse of the Non-Cooperation movement. For them to contest the elections and to enter the Legislature was not the end. They looked for a new period of active struggle when the government would reject the National Demands. The practical development of this struggle obviously depended on the character of the National Demands. The question was whether the demands would be such that the government would find it necessary to reject them, or they would be so formulated that it would not be impossible to find a *modus vivendi*. The leaders of the Party shrewdly avoided definite answer to this question. The National Demands remained shrouded in radical but vague phrases.

But the parliamentary fireworks failed to come up to their promised grandeur. Owing to the miserably limited franchise, the enthusiasm of the petty bourgeois intellectuals could not make a deep impression upon the results of the election. The enfranchised portion of the population belonged to the landowning and capitalist classes and to the rich peasantry and higher intellectuals directly under the influence of those classes. Fully conscious of this state of affairs, the Swarajist leaders made it quite clear in their programme that the Party stood essentially for the landed and capitalist interests. But the necessity of rallying the petty bourgeois intellectuals rendered it difficult for them to make the point sufficiently clear. The Swaraj Party won a partial victory at the polls. In one province they secured a clear majority, while in the central legislature as well as in a number of important provinces they commanded a powerful minority. But on the whole, they were not in a position to dictate their terms to the government. This partial victory was a relief to the Swarajist leaders. A greater victory would have been an embarrassment for them. It sounds paradoxical, but such was the case. Because as the circumstances stood they could argue that it was not possible to make the National Demands uncompromising; not commanding an independent majority, they could not carry those demands, and to secure a Nationalist majority for the demands, the latter must be made acceptable to the right-wing parties. A greater parliamentary victory would have embarrassed the Swaraj Party in that in such a case there would be no excuse for not presenting the full National Demands which would certainly be rejected by the government, and the movement would come back to the same old cross-roads, namely, whether to fight with imperialism or to capitulate to it. Since the Swarajists hated to be at these cross-roads, they preferred a partial victory to complete victory.

Once in the parliament, the Swaraj Party did not delay in showing its class character. It immediately struck up an alliance with the left-wing of the bourgeois Liberals who had all along supported the government. This alliance was made at the sacrifice of the National Demands, heralded to the country in such radical phrases. The demands were moderated till they were acceptable to the bourgeoisie. The final form in which they were presented and carried through the legislature with the help of a section of the right-wing parties, was limited to the recommendation for certain measures in order to reconcile the conflict between the Nationalists on the one hand and the government on the other. But even this much was not granted by the government, which remained unmoved in its powerful obduracy.

Now the Swaraj Party was obliged to make good its second promise—that of inaugurating the tactics of parliamentary obstruction upon the rejection of the National Demands by the government. Then followed a year of parliamentary skirmishes only to culminate in the bankruptcy of the tactics of obstructionism. The Swaraj Party, in alliance with the left-wing Liberals, scored a series of parliamentary victories, of which great political capital was made by them. But for all practical purposes they were of very insignificant importance. Undoubtedly this parliamentary opposition could be of some political value if it was coordinated with organized popular resistance in the country. Had the Swarajists really meant to take up a struggle against imperialist absolutionism, they could have organized such a popular resistance in support of their parliamentary activities. They could have done it because the mass discontent which supplied the dynamic energy to the Non-Cooperation movement was still in existence and could be brought to bear upon the political situation if a suitable expression was found for it. But the very fact that the Swaraj Party was the political crystallization of the tendencies which from the very beginning had been hostile to any revolutionary developments, precluded it from taking up any serious struggle.

The parliamentary fireworks ended in a political deadlock when the Legislatures of two provinces were dismissed by the government for their repeated refusal to pass the budget. There were two alternatives, namely, to carry the fight into the country or to surrender before the uncompromising attitude of the government. This deadlock brought about a crisis inside the Party. The bourgeois element, consciously representing the interests of the capitalists and landowning classes, pressed upon the necessity of abandoning the tactics of indiscriminate obstruction in favour of coming to terms with the government; while the intellectuals, still partially under petty bourgeois illusions, stuck to their wordy radicalism. But the Party as a whole steadily gravitated to the right since the intellectuals lacked the courage and the desire to insist upon any revolutionary action.

At last the deadlock is nearing its end, and a compromise with Imperialism is in sight. After six months of manoeuvring with the object of finding a formula by which a surrender to Imperialism can be camouflaged, the Party has openly declared its intention to give up its resistance. In the beginning of April a manifesto over the signature of C. R. Das, the leader of the Party, was issued, in which were laid down the conditions for the Party to give up its parliamentary obstruction and accept office. That is, the protest against the Reforms Act of 1919 is liquidated. This attitude of the Swaraj Party was promptly reciprocated by a very reconciliatory speech by the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead. In answering questions on the prospects of establishing better relations with the Indian Nationalists, Lord Winterton, the Under-Secretary of State for India, stated in the House of Commons that a sufficiently favourable atmosphere had been created, and that an invitation to the Nationalist leaders, including Das and even Gandhi to come to England, was no longer out of the question, although it might be more advisable to let the government of India carry on the negotiations.

Now, what is this favourable atmosphere which is so heartily welcomed by the Conservative Government of Britain? The favourable atmosphere consists of the fact that the Swaraj Party, which until recently appeared as the most recalcitrant left-wing of the Nationalist movement, has categorically renounced all programme of a struggle for independence and unequivocally committed itself to the programme of self-government within the British Empire. All the resistance on the part of the Indian bourgeoisie has ceased. What is wanted is a junior partnership in the exploitation of the Indian masses. Imperialism on its side in this period of history finds it necessary to have the Indian bourgeoisie as a willing ally rather than as an element of discord to be watched always and to be handled roughly when necessary. The period of clash between imperialism and native capitalism is closed. The Swaraj Party was the 'foam' of this clash, to quote Lenin's telling characterization of the Cadets. In the coming period of reconciliation there will be hardly any necessity for the existence of such a Party. Henceforth bourgeois nationalism will be expressed through the constitutional channels of His Britannic Majesty's most loyal opposition.

The Swaraj Party started its spectacular career with the promise to 'end or mend' the present system of British administration. They certainly cannot claim that they have gone very far towards ending the British domination of India. They have not even made a very serious effort to mend it. The mending has taken place not in the nature of the British government, but in that of bourgeois nationalism.

But now the question is: does this bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism indicate an end of the struggle for the liberation of the Indian people? It certainly does not. It simply means that the struggle against imperialism cannot be carried on to victory under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. It also means that the nationalist intellectuals may indulge in heroic phrases, but they have not the courage nor the ability to organize and lead the Indian masses in a revolutionary struggle for liberation. But the necessity for the Indian people to liberate themselves from political domination and economic exploitation by British imperialism still remains. The forces of national revolution are not defeated. Only those who stood at the head of the movement uptil now have found it profitable to enter into compromise with imperialism rather than to carry on a revolutionary struggle. The anti-imperialist struggle is a historic necessity. It must be carried on, only with the difference that the social foundation of the Nationalist movement will be shifted to a different class. The workers and peasants will not only be the backbone of the nationalist movement in the coming period, they will have to assume the political leadership of the movement as well.

There are very important economic reasons for the political weakness of the Indian bourgeoise. The basis of pure bourgeois nationalism is the conflict between native capitalism and imperialism. In the present period of capitalist development, this conflict becomes more and more superficial every day. Indian capitalism is so much interlinked with and dependent upon British imperialism, that a serious political conflict leading up to a revolutionary situation has become practically impossible. The superficial character of purely bourgeois nationalism was envisaged by Lenin already at the Second Congress of the Communist International. In his report on the Colonial Commission he said:

'Certain rapprochement is to be noticed between the bourgeoisies of the exploiting countries and of the colonial countries. Very often, probably in the majority of cases, the bourgeoisie of the subjugated countries supports the Nationalist movement, but at the same time, in agreement with the imperialist bourgeoisie (that is, together with it), fights against all revolutionary movements and all revolutionary classes.'*

This rapprochement indicated by Lenin in 1920 has gone on very far in India. The general crisis of capitalism in the post-war period induced the British bourgeoisie radically to change its colonial policy. It was found out that the pre-war policy of forcing the colonies to remain in a state of industrial backwardness could no longer be maintained. Consequently, it was decided that an industrialized India would be of much more value to British imperialism than the agrarian India of the past. The capitalist development of India is thus taking place not in antagonism to British imperialism, but with the sanction and to the interest of British imperialism. This process of industrialization renders the Indian bourgeoisie a protege of British imperialism. A protege cannot fight against its protector, although it might not relish its place of inferiority. But this new economic policy of British imperialism, which deprives the Indian bourgeoisie of its insignificant revolutionary character, will, however, accentuate the crystallization of more numerous and more powerful economic forces. It will quicken the class differentiation, thereby liberating the working class from the ideological domination of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and the reactionary intellectuals. The working class will thus find itself in a position to grow into an independent political force. This process of revolutionizing the anti-imperialist struggle will not be so protracted as it appears in view of the present politically backward conditions of the Indian proletariat. The capitulation of the Nationalist bourgeoisie does not by any means remove the fundamental economic causes which make for a chronic discontent among the masses of the population. The bourgeois Nationalists did not give a political expression to this discontent. On the contrary, they did their best to separate the nationalist movement from this fountainhead of revolutionary energy. So the immediate consequence of a compromise between the Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism will be felt in the development of new forms of anti-imperialist struggle, which will embody the discontent of the toiling masses. In other words, the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in struggle becomes a question of practical politics in the next stages of the revolutionary movement in India.*

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* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 31, pp. 241–2. SNR

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* In August 1924, the Government of India had appointed a committee to assess the results of the constitutional reforms, and the committee's published report stressed the defects of dyarchy. C. R. Das, who had successfully obstructed dyarchy in Bengal, agreed to meet Lord Lytton, Governor of Bengal secretely to discuss the possibility of a *modus vivendi*. On 29 March, 1925, Das published a declaration which categorically renounced violence, and which committed his party to the goal of Swaraj 'on terms of equality and honourable partnership in the Empire" ('C. R. Das's Manifesto', Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register* 1925, I, 87). The Secretary of State, Lord Birkenhead, responded on 31 March welcoming Das's declaration. On 2 May, 1925 presiding over the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur, Das expressed the willingness of the nationalists to cooperate with the British provided the Government guaranteed 'our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the commonwealth in the near future'. 'In the meantime, till Swaraj comes', he explained, 'a sure and sufficient foundation must necessarily be a matter of negotiation and settlement'. (P. C. Ray, *Life and Times of C. R. Das*, London, 1927, p. 254). SNR

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After his expulsion from Germany in January 1924, M. N. Roy moved to Zurich where his cover address was C/o. Dr. C. A. Hitz Bey, Nationalrat, Turner Strasse, 19. In March he went to Annecy in France and from there to Paris where a cover address was provided by Henri Barbusse, Comite pro-Hindou, 26 rue Henri-Monnier. To circumvent, at least temporarily, repeated proscription and seizure of his periodical by the Intelligence department in India, he decided to change again its name. The first issue of *The Masses of India* came out in January 1925; but on 30 January he and Evelyn were arrested by the French police. Evelyn was released and allowed to stay, but Roy was expelled from France. He moved to Luxembourg but British Indian Secret Service agents were at his heels carrying a warrant for his arrest from the district magistrate of Kanpur.

During 1925–26 Roy was frequently on the move, quite often clandestinely in Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy and Switzerland; he had also to attend to his executive work at the Comintern office in Moscow (According to J. T. Murphy Roy had rooms on the first floor of the Lux Hotel on Tverskaia Street, a few doors away from Kuusinen and Katayama, along the same corridor.) Nonetheless, he managed to edit and bring out *The Masses* fairly regularly each month. His main problem was to ensure despatch and delivery of the journal to contacts in India. Hamburg, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Genoa and Marseilles were explored; the last was found relatively more suitable for sending copies secretly through lascars engaged by Messageries Maritimes and the P & O. While a good number of copies managed fairly regularly to reach their various destinations in India, the number intercepted by the police was not small. It is known that copies of each issue were sent by ordinary mail or in bundles through messengers to more than a thousand addresses. According to the report of the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, 'during the second half of 1926 no less than 4, 274 copies were intercepted, and during 1927, up to date, about 700 copies have been seized each month'. (Sir David Petrie, *Communism in India 1924–1927*, 1972 reprint, Calcutta, p. 115).

Except in 1927 when he was away for several months in China, much of the editorial writing was done by Roy, but he had also a small team to assist him. Until late in 1925 or very early in 1926 when she returned to the United States, his principal editorial associate was Evelyn. A very dedicated and competent person, she suffered from Roy's frequent absence from Paris (where he could only come secretly and at the grave risk of extradition) and from the unconcealed distrust and hostility shown to her personally by Roy's jealous opponents among the Indian revolutionaries in Europe. Besides Evelyn, other members of *The Masses* team were Clemens Palme Dutt of the Communist Party of Great Britain and Mohammad Ali; together with Roy they also constituted the Foreign Bureau of the CPI. Another member of the team was G. A. K. Luhani. From intelligence service reports it would seem that until the Sixth Congress Roy relied much on Mohammad Ali, a founder member of the emigre CPI at Tashkent, student of KUTV in 1921, Roy's agent in Kabul in 1922, his secret emissary to underground contacts in India in 1924, and his chief supervisor of despatch of *The Masses* and other clandestine literature to India from Marseilles. Mohammad Ali whose real name was Khusi Mohammad but who had several aliases (Ahmed Hasan, Sepassi, Ibrahim, Dr. Nayar etc.) continued to be a Comintern functionary after Roy's break with the Comintern. He was killed by Hitler's men during the Nazi occupation of Paris.

The last issue of *The Masses of India* of which I have a photo copy is dated April 1928. Presumably it was discontinued as Roy, incapacitated by mastoiditis, had to be removed in the same month from Moscow to Berlin. SNR

Philosophy of Property*

In an article on 'City and Village' in the *Viswabharati*, Rabindranath Tagore expresses some of his views on 'property', which cannot fail to interest those who have looked up to him as a poet, philosopher and prophet. Denunciation of industrialism, as expressed through 'unaesthetic' modern cities, is a favourite pastime of the Poet, but it is seldom that he can be caught on any concrete question of human life. He has condemned industrialism so vehemently that many of his Western admirers took him for a Socialist.

The Paris journal, *Clarte*, in a recent review of his essays on Nationalism, remarked that Tagore should have named his book 'Capitalism', instead of 'Nationalism'.[1] But the article under consideration dissipates all ambiguity as regards the character of the Poet's philosophy. More, it throws a flood of light on the cult of 'Spiritual Nationalism' in India, of which Tagore is one of the chief exponents. The Poet has come out openly in defence of private property, which he considers to be an eternal human attribute. Thus, by one stroke of his authoritative pen, he has burst the bubble of the 'special genius' of Indian civilization. The statements and opinions expressed in the course of this article testify to the fact that there is no essential difference between what is called the 'cultural civilisation' of the East and the 'materialistic civilisation' of the West, the foundations of both being private property. This is nothing new to us, but we are certainly happy to have such an eminent authority on our side, especially one who has determinedly upheld the opposite thesis, namely, that the East has a special contribution to make to the world in the shape of its non-materialistic and spiritual civilization.

The issue of private property, its merits and demerits, raised by the Poet, requires an exhaustive treatment which considerations of space do not here permit,—we may appeal to the liberalism and tolerance of the *Viswabharati* to allow us to criticize the views of Rabindranath in extenso. Meanwhile, some general reflections may be made, not directly bearing upon the 'eternal nature of property', but regarding a number of correlated topics of no less importance, incidentally touched upon by the writer.

Mr Tagore raises the question of private property while speaking of the general demand for a higher standard of living. He detects greed behind this demand, with which he has no sympathy, because it violates his doctrine of the 'simple life in the village'. He, however, does not impose this beneficial doctrine upon those fortunate ones 'whom wealth gives opportunity for self-sacrifice'. While benevolently condoning the excesses of wealth 'restricted to limited regions', he shakes his moral mane at the 'epidemic of voracity that has infected the total area of civilisation'. The burden of his philosophy is obvious. He does not consider the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a small class to be objectionable; in fact, he declares that in a society which permits such a state of affairs, (with some modification, namely, that the rich give a part of their wealth to charity, etc.)—'property is the pillar that supports civilization.' But he holds that civilization to be damned which demands such a distribution of the social wealth as will raise the standard of living of the people at large. Hurling his anathemas against 'modern civilisation', the Poet cries: 'The intemperance, which could safely have been tolerated in a few, has spread its contagion to the multitude'. That is, confortable living, normal enjoyment, even debauchery can be tolerated in the fortunate few, who throw alms out of their bounty to the needy; but the desire of the multitude who have toiled from time immemorial to produce the wealth appropriated by the few, to share in the enjoyment of that wealth, is deemed to be damnable greed which makes for the collapse of civilization!

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. 1 No. 1, January 1925, unsigned article. SNR

[1] See note at the end of the article. SNR

The class-character of this philosophy is unmistakable. Following up his line of reasoning, Mr Tagore discovers that it is not the expansionist tendency of capitalist industrialism, but the 'greed' of the European working class, that is the root cause of the Imperialism which subjugates Asia and Africa. He lays down: 'the universal greed is the cause of the meanness, cruelty and lies in politics and commerce, that vitiate the whole human atmosphere'. He opines that the great industrial powers are obliged to seek victims where 'human flesh is cheap', in order to 'maintain constant feasts for a whole population of gluttons'. This view of the cause of Imperialism shows how miserably imperfect is the Poet's knowledge of industrialism, which he so wisely condemns, and how eminently aristocratic would be the society of his ideal.

Since dogmatic opposition to 'Western' industrialism is the Poet's stock-in-trade, he should acquaint himself a little more about its causes and effects. Even a very casual reading of history will teach him that the imperialist expansion of the European nations began with the adventures of the mercantile class in search of the lands of spices and precious stones. The fabulous booty that reached Spain from America did not go into the pockets of the common people, but added to the corrupt grandeur of the Court, nobility and merchants. In the latter stages of Imperialism, the motive ceased to be sheer predatory adventure; it was to sell the products of home industry at a higher profit, to find raw materials and to secure the monopoly rights of investment. The working class had not a word to say in this policy of expansion. It was determined by the interests of the capitalists, who guided the policy of the state. The demand for a general rise in the standard of living was not the cause of Imperialism. It is one of the by-products. If the imperialist bourgeoisie had the same aristocratic notions of society as Tagore has, and considered any elevation in the workers' standard of living as morally objectionable, they might not occupy the place they occupy today. It does not pay to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. The working classes in the advanced industrialized countries are not 'gluttonous', as the Poet, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, declares. They must be given enough to keep them in such physical and mental conditions as will enable them to produce profits for the 'fortunate few' who possess ninety per cent of the total wealth. If Mr Tagore desires to purify property by such a magical process as to place it beyond greed, let him first try his magic on those who possess. The gospel of simple living should be preached to those who are rolling in luxury. The world will be a much better place to live in when a comfortable human existence is secured for all.

The Poet's opposition to industrialism leads him in such questionable directions, because he is actuated by a reactionary social ideal. Had his criticism of the industrial system been revolutionary, even progressive, he would find that the root of all trouble lies in the right of property. But he frankly believes in the eternal nature of property. His solution of the present social problem is to replace the existing form of property-relations by an earlier form, already left behind in the evolution of modern civilization. He would replace capitalism by patriarcho-feudal aristocracy. He begrudges the working class that relatively higher standard of living which incidentally follows an improvement in social production. He is against modern industrialism because it disrupts the class of landed aristocracy to which he belongs. He is against the 'gluttonous' demand for a general rise in the standard of living, because an improvement in the material conditions of life correspondingly quickens the intellectual aspect of human existence, making the ancient benevolent patriarchy of Tagore's ideal a thing of the dead past.

To prove his thesis that the form of property-relation which makes for the accumulation of wealth in 'limited regions' is highly beneficial for society, Rabindranath conjures up the picture of ancient India. Obviously he is unaware that the picture he paints was not peculiar to

India alone. The same conditions prevailed in Europe under the feudal-aristocratic regime of the middle-ages. 'Voluntary taxation of the rich' to maintain the water-supply, medical help, education and amusement, was a feature of mediaeval civilization wherever it flourished. But there was no superior moral sense of 'mutual obligation' behind this act. In those days, the toiling masses, attached to the land as serfs, constituted part and parcel of the private property of the owner, who had to feed them, house them and look after their general welfare for the sake of his own interest, just as he did in the case of his horses and cattle. When the institution of serfdom breaks up, under pressure of new social and economic forces, the upper classes cease to perform these 'voluntary duties'. A new form of property-relation creates a different conception of 'social responsibility'. The obligation of the slave-owner to feed and care for his slaves disappears when the latter, in appearance, become 'freemen'. But under the new social conditions, the class-antagonism becomes sharper, becomes more distinctly revealed, the propertied class makes the 'liberated' serf pay for his freedom. So long as the worker remained a chattel like one of his horses, cattle or dogs, the owner took care of him, even petted him, as he would a favoured animal; but as soon as the worker ceases to be a chattel, all 'human touch'ceases to exist, and brutal exploitation becomes the predominating feature of the relations between the propertied and expropriated classes. Patriarchal benevolence, in which feudal serfdom is garbed, is supplanted by the wage-system. The class-struggle becomes accentuated, as the employer seeks to exact the maximum amount of labour for the minimum amount of wages. The working class, on the other hand, growing more and more conscious of their rights as free human beings, demand adequate value for their labour, which is the source of wealth.

It is against this demand of the workers that the Poet takes his stand. He is not alone in this inglorious battle. A whole galaxy of philosophers and economists, seeking to perpetuate the present social order, are with him; the philosophers and economists who try to justify and explain the present class-ridden civilization. But the Poet's tirades against industrialism will not be appreciated or even tolerated by this learned company. He would be too reactionary even for them.

Mr Tagore finds himself in such an anomalous condition because of his incoherent theories. He believes in private property, but is opposed to the evolution of property forms and relations. He affirms the existence of property to be a 'moral force', yet denies the essential 'morality' of the present form of property-relations, capitalist industrialism, which rests upon and is a product of the sacred right of private property. Not knowing how to extricate himself from this dilemma, Tagore postulates that property-relations should develop as far as feudal-patriarchy, and stop there. But this is impossible. The forces that determine the evolution of benevolent despotism out of tribal patriarchy, do not cease to operate at the bidding of a reactionary dreamer. The modern plutocrat is just as inevitable a product of these forces of evolution as was the benevolent despot. If property is eternal, as Tagore holds, its successive stages of evolution cannot be denied. To preach the eternal nature and beneficial role of property, and to denounce modern industrialism, whose foundation is private property, as immoral, is either hypocrisy or blinking at facts.

But the most significant feature of the Tagorean philosophy is the fact that he takes exception not to the present form of property-relation, but to the general demand of the masses for a rise in their standard of living. The Poet laments: 'With the rise in the standard of living property changes its aspects. It shuts the gates of hospitality, which is the best means of social inter-communication'. The standard of living of the people at large should not be elevated, because it deprives the 'fortunate few' of the pleasure of feeding the poor. The great mass of humanity should remain in a state of 'simple poverty', so that the moral stamina of the rich may be raised by acts of charity, hospitality, self-sacrifice, etc.! If this is the 'special genius' of Indian culture, India is indeed obsessed with an evil genius!

According to the Poet, the curse of industrial civilization is not its capitalist character; it is the 'popular claim to the right of freedom to be extravagant in our enjoyment, to the extent that we can afford it'. What signifies this reprehensible claim, which Tagore holds to be the root-cause of the moral depravity of modern civilization? It signifies ultimately a challenge to the rights of property! The enormous wealth, produced by social labour, must cease to be the exclusive possession of a small and privileged class; it must be so distributed as to insure to every member of the human community a minimum standard of material comfort, as well as intellectual and aesthetic enjoyment.

This growing desire, conscious or unconscious, of the expropriated and exploited majority, to reconstitute social production, is not at all compatible with the social philosophy which holds property to be eternal and the very foundation of human existence. This is the reason that Tagore and the whole school of reactionary social philosophers combat this growing desire on the part of the working-class to share in the products of their labour, just as the defenders of capitalism do. The chief difference is that the Poet and his followers clothe their opposition to any change in the system of property, in the language of philosophy and theology; they take their stand on moral grounds, while bourgeois economists argue in the language of necessity and expediency. Tagore and his school preach the gospel of simplicity and glorify poverty and want in order to prevent the growing demands of the submerged multitude from breaking out into a mighty flame of revolution, which will burn away the last vestige of the 'sacred right of private property' that has become a fetter to further human progress.

Note:

Tagore's lectures on nationalism were given in 1916 during his visit to Japan and the United States and they were published as a book under the title *Nationalism* in 1917. Tagore's highly critical view of the ideology of nationalism which he described as 'organised collective selfishness', destructive of conscience and creative personality, provoked much hostility in Japan, the U.S. and India. In his own country in particular he was bitterly attacked by the nationalists, especially of the militant or radical wing.

In 1905 at the time of the Partition of Bengal Tagore had composed a number of patriotic songs which immediately became very popular with the Bengali nationalists. Roy (at the time Narendra Nath Bhattacharya) joined the underground revolutionary movement in that year and was deeply moved by these songs; he remembered some of them to the end of his life. However, after a short while Tagore, disillusioned with the militant nationalists, withdrew from the anti-Partition movement; and in his subsequent writings he became increasingly critical of the rhetoric and destructive passions and activities of the nationalists. His two major works of fiction, *Gora* (1910) and *Ghare-Baire* (1916), highlighted the moral shortcomings and dangers of nationalism.

Like other revolutionary nationalists Roy too, before his conversion to Marxism, considered Tagore's critique of nationalism to be an act of betrayal. However, even after he had become a Marxist, he did not appreciate Tagore's views. As this article makes abundantly clear, he interpreted Tagore's social views to be a plea for the continuation of the present system of exploitation, or even worse, for return to the pre-capitalist patiarchal-feudal order. Naturally, he considered Tagore's views to be reactionary. A radical criticism, he felt, was required, in view particularly of Tagore's visits to Europe in 1920–21 and again briefly in 1925 and the enthusiasm for his personality and message displayed by his western admirers.

Later in life when Roy moved from Marxism to radical humanism I persuaded him to read Tagore's *Nationalism, Gora* and the *Kalantar* essays. He recognized that he had not been altogether fair to Tagore and that there were some important points of affinity between Tagore's universalist and decentralist ideas and the principles of radical humanism. Nonetheless, he did not even then feel much enthusiasm for Tagore. SNR

Two Letters

*To the Minister of the Interior of the French Republic, Paris**

Sir:

The undersigned appeals to you to make good the injustice of which he has been victim at the hands of the French police.

On 30 January, on an order of expulsion signed by your department on 3 January, I was arrested and conducted to the French frontier without being given either the time or the opportunity to defend myself, and without being informed of the reasons for my expulsion. Certain facts lead me to believe that this has been brought about under pressure from the British Government.

Similar pressure, emanating from the same source, has already been brought to bear upon the governments of other countries in which I have resided, having been forced to flee from India to escape the penalties of that law which holds my country and its people in a state of slavery—law against which I have fought for twenty years, and against which I will fight all my life. Since 1915 I have been in exile, having left India to avoid a heavy punishment. Since that time, I have been spied upon and my footsteps dogged by the British police from the Orient to America, from America to Europe. In 1917 I sought refuge in Mexico. The Mexican Government refused my extradition or expulsion, several times demanded by the British authorities. Since then, I have lived and travelled as a Mexican citizen, with the papers given to me by the Government of Mr Carranza.

I arrived in Europe in 1920, and have lived in various countries. Pressure was brought to bear upon the German and Swiss Governments to bring about my expulsion, but without success. I came to France in July of 1924, in the hope of remaining here. During the six months of my stay, I have taken no part in the internal politics of this country. All I ask is the right which belongs to every man, to work for the liberty of his own country. Nevertheless, an order of expulsion was signed and executed against me by the French Government, upon the testimony and charges emanating from British sources, as is proven to me by certain facts incidental to my arrest.

In order to vindicate the right of asylum for Indian political refugees on French soil, I request you to annul the order of expulsion against me, and to permit me to return to France.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. 1, Nos. 2–3, February-March 1925. SNR

With assurances of the highest esteem, I remain,

Very truly yours,
Manabendra Nath Roy.*

Luxembourg, 1 February 1925.

Note

From Mexico Roy had arrived in Europe carrying 'a Mexican diplomatic passport issued to Roberto Alleny Villa Garcia' (*M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, Bombay 1964, p. 223). Prior to his flight to Mexico, there had been attempts by the British-Indian Secret Service to kidnap him in the United States and take him to India. In Europe his activities and movements were constantly under surveillance by the British-Indian police agents, his mail was intercepted, moneys and publications sent by him to his Indian contacts seized, and elaborate plans were made to arrest him should he visit England, and then despatch him to India under the Fugitive Offenders Act of 1881. Details of the unceasing pursuit and persecution of Roy by the British-Indian police during the twenties are to be found in the confidential reports prepared by the successive Directors of the Intelligence Bureau, Government of India. These reports have since been published. Sir Cecil Kaye, *Communism in India* 1919–1924, Calcutta, 1971: and Sir David Petrie, *Communism in India* 1924–1927, Calcutta, 1972.

SNR.

To the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, Paris[*]

Sirs:

Permit me to submit the following facts for your consideration, thinking that they demand an intervention on your part.

On 30 January I was arrested in Paris in fulfilment of an order of expulsion signed by the French Ministry of the Interior on 3 January, and was immediately conducted to the frontier, without having been informed of the reasons for my expulsion, and without being given the means to consult a lawyer for my defence.

Thus, by one stroke of the pen, the right of asylum for Indian political refugees has been destroyed, and with this right, the idea which Indian revolutionaries hold, that France is the home of Liberty and Democracy for all the oppressed peoples of the world.

I appeal to the Ligue des Droits de l 'Homme to obtain redress, and to this end, I shall briefly recount the facts:

For twenty years, that is to say, since the age of fourteen years, I have fought in the ranks of Indian revolutionaries to free ourselves from foreign rule. My activity, dedicated to the cause of the 320,000,000 oppressed people of my country, has brought upon me, as upon all Indian revolutionaries, the brutal persecution of the English police. I have been imprisoned several times. In 1915, I was forced to fly from India to escape the extreme penalty of the so-called 'law' which holds the Indian people in their present state of slavery.

The British police have not left me in peace, even in my exile. They have pursued me step by step, from one country to another, from Java to Japan, from China to the Philippines, to America, to Mexico and through most of the countries of Europe. Having taken refuge in Mexico in 1917, President Carranza, then at the head of the Government, gave me protection, and twice refused a demand for my expulsion presented by the British authorities. The exigencies of a revolutionary life have forced me on several occasions to adopt different names. The sympathy of the Mexican people and government enabled me to live and travel with a Mexican name which protected me to a certain extent since 1919, when I left for Europe with my wife. Since that time, we have lived and travelled in most of the European countries, writing, studying, organizing and making propaganda for the liberation of India.

We left Switzerland for France in 1924, and have lived here six months, working for our cause, without ever mixing ourselves in the internal politics of this country.

My expulsion can only be attributed to foreign pressure brought to bear upon the French government, as it was brought to bear upon the American, Mexican, German and Swiss Governments. The French authorities know whence this pressure comes, but it is difficult to believe that France has voluntarily agreed to become an instrument of British Imperialism. My case is not the only one. Acting under British pressure, the Government of M. Poincare expelled and interned Indian political exiles who had sought asylum in Pondichery and Chandernagore. Two such cases were brought before the attention of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme during the summer of 1924. Can the revolutionary traditions of the great French people accept such acts of oppression against Indian political refugees, seeking shelter from British persecution of French soil?

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[*] *The Masses of India*, Vol. 1, Nos. 2–3, February-March 1925. SNR

In the name of all Indian revolutionaries, I call your attention to this violation of the right of asylum and demand the annulation of the order of expulsion against me, and the right to enter and to live in France.

With assurances of the highest esteem, I remain,
Very truly yours,
Manabendra Nath Roy.*

Luxembourg, 1 February 1925.

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* After Roy's expulsion in January 1925 efforts were made to get the order rescinded by the French government. A 'Comité Pro-Hindou' was formed, and this was announced in 'An Appeal to Intellectuals and Radicals on behalf of the People of India'. The General Secretary of the Committee was the well-known French writer Henri Barbusse who had provided Roy with a 'cover address' during the period of the latter's stay in Paris. The League of the Rights of Man to which Roy had appealed on 1 February informed Barbusse on 11 May of its failure to get the expulsion order rescinded. The League's letter to Barbusse together with an editorial note was published in *The Masses* of June 1925 (vol. 1, no. 6, p. 2).

According to the editorial note, 'the intervention of M. Ferdinand Buisson, President of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme and Vice-President of the French Chamber of Deputies, was energetic and imperative, having behind it the authority of a very powerful organization numbering over 140,000 members, most of them influential supporters of the present government. Under normal circumstances, such an intervention would have been sufficient to annul the order of expulsion against Mr Roy . . . The weight of the pound sterling on French political destinies lies too heavily to admit of any indulgence in the French ideals of liberty and democracy, which may be prejudicial to British interests. The united imperialist front of the European powers against the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the East is a living fact in present-day politics.

The letter addressed to 'M. Henri Barbusse, General Secretary of the Comité Pro-Hindou, 26 rue Henri-Monnier, Paris', included the letter from the Minister of the Interior to the President of the League. The Minister's letter stated: 'You have been good enough to express to me in a very urgent fashion, your desire to have the order of expulsion taken by my predecessor against Manabendra Nath Roy, whose real name is Narendra Nath Bhattacharjee, Indian subject, annulled. I have sent for the files of this foreigner, and after an attentive examination, I have the honour to make known to you that it has not been possible for me to reconsider the measure.'

Henri Barbusse who organized the Comité Pro-Hindou was born in 1873. He published his first book of poems, *Pleureuses*, in 1895 and a violently realist novel, *L'enfer*, in 1908, but became famous with the publication of *Le Feu : Journal d'une escouade* in 1916. It was awarded the Goncourt Prize in 1917 and has since become a classic. Shortly after the end of war he founded an international review, *Clarté*. (It is to this periodical that reference was made in *The Masses* article on Tagore). He joined the Communist Party of France and became a very prominent figure in a number of front organizations. In 1924 he published a monumental study of slavery and revolt in history, *Les Enchainements*, in two volumes. In the late twenties and early thirties he became an ardent supporter of Stalin, wrote four propaganda-type books on the Soviet Union including one on Stalin and attended the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (1928) and briefly the Seventh Congress (1935). From 1928 to his death in August 1935 he edited and published a weekly, *Monde*. He was very active in the League against Imperialism and organized campaigns against Fascism and war. An intimate friend of Roy and Evelyn, he had in the early thirties as one of his colleagues in the anti-fascist movement Ellen Gottschalk who would marry M. N. Roy. SNR

The Death of Sun Yat Sen*

Sometime ago we gave in these columns extracts from some notable pronouncements of Sun Yat Sen on his policy; we drew attention to him as to an example which the leaders of the revolutionary movement in India could emulate.[1]

Today we have to record with profound sorrow the death of the great Chinese revolutionary leader. He died in Peking on the 11 March while still actively engaged in the great task to which he had harnessed himself during forty years of ceaseless revolutionary activity. With him, there disappears from the arena of world-politics a formidable figure in whom the aspirations of the revolutionary East had found a remarkable synthesis and whom the Imperialist Powers had come to recognize as one of their most redoubtable enemies.

Sprung from peasant stock, Sun Yat Sen was born sixty-three years ago in Canton in South China, the city destined to be the headquarters of his revolutionary government later on. He was born into a scene of political turmoil as his native province of Canton had been the storm-centre of Chinese nationalism since 1850. With the annexation of Annam by France, Sun Yat Sen entered, at an early age, into his revolutionary career. As a student he was the member of secret societies for the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty. At the time of the Sino-Japanese war in 1895, he organized a popular rising in Canton as the result of which he had to leave China precipitately and take refuge in Europe. Going back to Canton in 1900 he organized there a second insurrection which was suppressed like the first.

By this time Sun Yat Sen had become well known as a determined revolutionary leader working for the destruction of the monarchy in the Celestial Empire. He founded, all over the world, among the Chinese emigres, propaganda centres, from which revolutionary ideas spread over China. He himself could not enter China and the whole of the Far East was forbidden to him. It was only in 1911, on the morrow of the first Chinese revolution, that he could go back openly to his country where he became in 1912 the first president of the Chinese republic. He had however very soon to make room for Yuan Shi Kai, who came to power supported by a reactionary band of military adventurers. It was then that Sun Yat Sen laid the foundations of his famous Kuomintang party (the People's Party), a party which was destined to play a great role in later years. An indefatigable revolutionary, he put himself at the head of a new insurrection in 1913 and had again to leave China. In Tokyo, where he had taken refuge, he separated from the reformist section of the Kuomintang and formed the 'Party of the Chinese Revolution'. In 1915, he started a revolt against the dictatorship of Yuan Shi Kai and succeeded this time in upsetting him.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. 1 No. 4, April 1925, unsigned article. SNR

[1] See note at the end of the article.

After the War, we find him once again in Canton where he formed in 1920 the National Revolutionary Government of South China in opposition to the Central government in Peking. From that moment he already formed the idea of an alliance with Soviet Russia. Meanwhile he had come more to identify himself with the Chinese workers and the peasants. He supported the big strikes of Hong Kong and Macao. In 1923 he re-organized the old Kuomintang party, this time as a mass party of workers and peasants, inspired by Communist ideas. The party entered into close relations with the revolutionary proletariat of Soviet Russia and thus for the first time an organized Eastern proletariat was united with the revolutionary proletariat of the West. His death has intervened to prevent Sun Yat Sen from realizing the world-revolutionary possibilities with which this proletarian union of the East and the West is charged, but it will remain as a great monument to the largeness of his revolutionary vision.

In the so-called civil war which the Imperialist Powers succeeded in provoking in China in 1924, Sun Yat Sen made common cause with Huan Shi Chou and Chang So Lin, the war-lord of Manchuria. It was a period of great peril for the Southern Revolutionary Government over which Sun Yat Sen presided. Canton itself was under the menace of the guns of the British Fleet which lay at anchor, and profiting by the occasion, the merchants of Canton, who had good reason to hate the Government of Sun Yat Sen, rose in rebellion. However, the civil war ended on the military scene and restarted on the political scene in Peking where Sun Yat Sen, just before his fatal illness, was trying to bring about the convocation of a National Assembly for the whole of China.

We want to draw particular attention to the idea, which Sun Yat Sen developed in latter days, of a Pan-Asiatic federation against the Imperialist Powers of Europe. To that, he had joined the other idea of the union of the revolutionary nationalist movements of the East with the revolutionary proletariat of the West. Therein the great Chinese revolutionary had laid his finger on the veritable dynamic forces of world-revolution. He had made a beginning of the momentous juxtaposition in China. The Kuomintang Party, though at the present moment passing through an internal crisis, may accomplish the task left unfinished by the great leader.

The following estimate of Sun Yat Sen will be read with interest in India: 'Sun Yat Sen will go down in history as the greatest figure of a leader of the national revolutionary movements of the East in the first quarter of the twentieth century. He was neither a communist nor a Marxist. His programme—'Nationalism, Democracy, Socialism'—bore all the signs of the backwardness of the social conditions of China. He tentatively sought his way, but he hated with a righteous hate the Imperialists who had subjugated his native country. He devoted his life fully and entirely to his people, and what is most important, in the last years of his life, he perceived more and more clearly that the suppressed peoples can emancipate themselves and create the pre-conditions of a new life only in close alliance with the world proletariat. Sun Yat Sen was not a Gandhi, the leader of the moderate wing of the Nationalists of India. Gandhi, during the last few years, has developed more and more along a *descending line*. To the brutalities of the English imperialists, Gandhi replied with a thirty days' fast. The incapacity of those groups which are led by Gandhi will unavoidably lead to their coming to an understanding with the imperialist oppressors, which is tantamount to surrender. Not so Sun Yat Sen. During the last years of his life in particular he developed along an *ascending line*.'

On the eve of his death Sun Yat Sen wrote his last message to the Kuomintang Party in which he stated, among other things: 'Forty years of work for the national freedom and equal rights for China have brought me to the firm conviction that China can only achieve its aim by mobilizing the masses and by the closest collaboration with those peoples who consider us as equals. The fight for the completion of the revolution must be continued. The National Assembly must be convened and the demand put forward for the annulment of all treaties in which China is not treated as a party with equal rights.'

Sun Yat Sen addressed the following message to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union: 'Dear Comrades. Here on my death-bed my thoughts turn to you, as well as to the future destiny of my Party and of my country. You are at the head of the Union of free Republics, that heritage which the immortal Lenin has left to all the suppressed peoples of the World. By means of this heritage, the victims of imperialism will inevitably win their emancipation from that social order which has always been based upon slavery, war and injustice. I leave behind me a party which, as I always hoped, will be allied with you in its historical task of liberating China and other suppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism. My charge to the Kuomintang Party before all is that it shall continue to promote the cause of the national revolutionary movement for the emancipation of China, which has been degraded by imperialism into a semi-colonial country. I, therefore, charge my Party to maintain permanent contact with you. I cherish the firm belief that your support of my country will remain unaltered. In taking my last leave of you, dear Comrades, I express the hope that the day is approaching when the Soviet Union will greet in a free and strong China its friend and ally, and that the two States will proceed hand in hand as allies in the great fight for the emancipation of the oppressed of the whole world.'

The death-bed messages of Sun Yat Sen are worthy of a great revolutionary career; they are testaments not only for China but for the whole of the revolutionary East. If it is true of China that its freedom can only be attained by 'the mobilizing of the masses and by the closest collaboration with those peoples who consider us as equals', it is equally true of India and other parts of the subjugated East, over which imperialist domination has cast its sombre shadow.

We mourn with our Chinese comrades our common loss of Sun Yat Sen.

We repeat with the world proletariat: Long Live the Work of Sun Yat Sen! Long Live the Workers and Peasants of China!

Note:

[1] :The earlier piece mentioned here appeared under the title 'Sun Yat Sen: An Example for India' in the issue of *The Masses*, No. 1 January 1925, pp. 13–14. It quoted passages from Sun Yat Sen's Manifesto which outlined his policy of national reconstruction, then mentioned reports in the London *Times* and in *L'Echo de Chine* of Shanghai which criticized Sun for moving towards the Soviet Union and the Communists, and at the end it recommended Sun to Indian nationalists for his belated realization that 'national freedom could be won only by the revolutionary action of the masses'.

Roy had already met Sun Yat Sen (1866–1925) in Japan in 1915–16. He had gone there in search of arms to organize an uprising in India against British rule. After the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in China in 1911, Sun had been elected provisional President, but had been forced to retire in favour of Yüan Shih K'ai. As conflict sharpened between the two, Sun was forced to flee to Japan from where he tried to organize opposition to Yüan. Sun in 1915 promised to help Roy if the latter were able to obtain from the German government 'five million dollars to purchase the entire store of arms and ammunitions at the disposal of the rebels in Yunan and Szechuan' who were in revolt against Yüan Shih K'ai (M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, 1964, pp. 6–7). The stock of arms and ammunition was to be handed over to Roy on payment of the requisite German money, and Roy was then to arrange to smuggle the stock through the north-eastern tribal frontier to his revolutionary comrades in India. The deal between Sun Yat Sen and M. N. Roy, however, did not materialize because Roy did not succeed in obtaining the required amount from the Germans and Sun did not, in fact, have any control over the rebels in Yunan and Szechuan.

Roy's later assessment of Sun Yat Sen was different from that given in the two articles in *The Masses*. In *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China* (German edition 1930; English edition 1946) he explained how and why Sun Yat Sen's principles represented 'the ideology of a class on the defensive' and were 'not a challenge to the old order'. SNR

The Late C. R. Das*

Just after we went to press last month, we heard the news of the death of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. He was the effective leader of the Swarajists in Bengal and exercised a preponderating influence in the shaping of Swarajist policy throughout India. He indeed shared with Pandit Motilal Nehru the distinction of having, after the Gaya Congress in 1922, organized the Swaraj Party as a party of secession from orthodox Non-Cooperation. It was by his inspiration and under his guidance that the Swaraj Party made its much-heralded entry into the Legislatures and there gave a spectacular demonstration of its political bankruptcy and its incapacity to give a lead in the fight for the freedom of India. The last political act of the dead Swarajist leader was his Faridpur speech in which all pretence to a militant programme of national liberation was formally given up on behalf of the Swaraj Party; the programme of the Party was then defined as the quest of 'honourable terms of co-operation' with the foreign bureaucracy. If anything, the demise of the lamented leader seems to have added a zest and an impetus to the quest, which is as it should be, because it is certainly a sincere form of tribute to the memory of the late Deshbandhu that his survivors in the Swarajist leadership should strive to realize his Faridpur programme which has almost taken on the character of a political testament by reason of his intervening death. Mahatma Gandhi himself has pledged his support to the programme; we even learn that, as an earnest of his promise, he has consented to the lapse of the yarn franchise for which he fought tooth and nail barely six months ago at the last Congress. The *Indian Social Reformer* of Bombay even made the suggestion—blended of unconscious humour and conscious astuteness—that the Mahatma, the more effectively to show the genuineness of his overwhelming grief at the death of his formidable Swarajist adversary, should seek election to the Legislative Assembly and thus become himself the official protagonist in the eyes of the world of the Swarajist creed—his own gospel of the salvation of India by the vicarious spinning of yarn having failed to touch with grace even the least sinful among the Scribes and the Pharisees.

For the moment however, the Mahatma has chosen to remain officially outside the Swarajist rank, trying meanwhile to further the Swarajist cause by helping in the choice of an appropriate successor to the late Deshbandhu. That successor has been chosen in the person of Mr Sen Gupta.[1] From what we know of the new Swarajist leader in Bengal, there is no reason to suppose that he will initiate a bold and realist policy to meet the growing intransigence of British Imperialism. He will be content to follow in the footsteps of the illustrious departed. The Swarajist deviation to the Right is an accomplished fact. The change in leadership is of very little importance. With time and under whatever leader, the deviation will become only more pronounced. It means that the social classes whom the Swaraj Party represents have ceased to be a revolutionary factor in the Indian situation. Instead of being, as the situation demanded, the out-and-out opponents of British Imperialism, they have climbed down to the seeking of terms of accommodation with it; in the logic of events, they will very soon degenerate into its worst abettors. In the process, the centre of gravity of the Indian fight for freedom is being transferred to other components of the population, namely the workers and the peasants.

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* *The Masses of India* Vol. 1, No. 7, July 1925, frontpage editorial. SNR

In noticing the Faridpur speech of the late C. R. Das in our last number, we said that he had proved himself to be a traitor to the interests of the masses of India.[2] We do not feel ourselves called upon to regret the epithet we employed. We rather intend to emphasize the fact of his treason, the more so, as we find that newspapers in India which—for reasons other than ours—used to find fault with the policy of C. R. Das, while alive, have been indulging in unmeasured adulation of him, now that he is dead. The *Navayuga* of Guntur—to choose one journal at random—in its issue of 17 May 1925, accused C. R. Das of having 'bungled and mismanaged in 1925' as Gandhi had bungled and mismanaged in 1922; it described as 'despicable' the surrender of Das to the foreign bureaucracy; and it heaped ignominy on him by saying that 'compared with Das's terms of cooperation, Dr Besant's Commonwealth of India Bill is infinitely better'. Well, the same *Navayuga* in its issue of 21 June 1925—no doubt overwhelmed by grief and penitence but somewhat unmindful of consistency—spoke of the dead Mr C. R. Das as 'a born revolutionary who dealt merciless and unceasing hammerblows against the bureaucracy'. The *Navayuga* is certainly within its rights when it tries to impose posthumous greatness on C. R. Das whom it hails as the 'uncrowned king of Bengal'; but the disappearance from the earth of so royal a figure, even when uncrowned, is not a sufficient pretext for so much mental confusion as is shown by our Guntur contemporary when it ascribes the quality of a 'born revolutionary' to one who had 'despicably' surrendered to the enemy, even before there had been occasion fairly to join issue.

Much of what has been written and spoken on the occasion of the

Deshbandhu's death is of a piece with this kind of nonsense. In the interests of the fight for freedom which the militant proletariat of India is henceforward to lead, it is not necessary to grudge whatever greatness his sincere followers and his confused opponents may ascribe to C. R. Das; but it is certainly necessary to combat the tendencies which he represented, particularly when these tendencies are presented by implication as being 'revolutionary'. Even if the testimony of his opportunist leadership of the Swaraj Party was not there, it would suffice to refer to his Faridpur speech—in which he repudiated revolutionary orientation and condemned revolutionaries—to see that, if C. R. Das was born as a revolutionary, he certainly did not die as one. What however is beyond doubt is that he was born—we mean, in the political sense—into revolutionary circumstances. When he emerged as the leader of the secessionists from orthodox Non-Co-operation, the situation in India was revolutionary. It has continued to be revolutionary in different degrees since then. The masses had then made their epoch-making entry into the political arena. In one fugitive moment of lucidity, C. R. Das had taken count of the situation and spoken of 'Swaraj for the 98 per cent' as the only Swaraj worth fighting for.[3] It was possible for him then to have followed in India the line of evolution which was followed in China almost contemporaneously by Sun Yat Sen. Instead, he stultified himself as a revolutionary leader by evolving in the opposite direction. He spoke vaguely of 'Swaraj for the 98 per cent'; he might have, as a matter of practical politics, transformed the limited and pusillanimous programme of his party into a broad and fighting programme, more in consonance with the interests of the '98 per cent'; he could thus have united into one organization the nationalist and the proletarian forces of revolution, as was indeed realized in China by Sun Yat Sen in his Kuomintang Party. Such a combination was *then* possible and it would have been irresistible; the workers and peasants of India—constituting an inherently revolutionary bloc—combined with the revolutionary elements in the other social classes of the population, would have irretrievably shaken the foundation of the British Empire in India, and Swaraj, promised as 'a mental state', would have been realized as an actual political State higher in any case than impotent enslavement to foreign domination.

But C. R. Das allowed the situation to go by default. He incarnated himself more and more as the representative of the interests of those social classes for whom separation from the British Empire was not an imperative necessity, not certainly a necessity to be satisfied at the cost of a bloody revolution. His treason to the interests of the 98 per cent began with his championship of the interests of the '2 per cent'. In the brief and inglorious career of C. R. Das as the Swarajist leader, we have had the spectacle of a would-be Indian Menshevik who failed even to rise to the level of a Kerensky,[4] having miserably 'bungled and mismanaged' an unquestionably revolutionary situation and having even forgotten to depose the English Tsar in India in his haste to pose as the premature champion of the interests of the liberal bourgeoisie.[5]

Notes

[1] Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta (1885–1933) began his political career in 1911 as a delegate from Chittagong to the Bengal Provincial Conference; in 1920 was elected one of the Secretaries of the Congress; gave up legal practice in 1921 and joined the non-cooperation movement; was elected to Bengal Legislative Council in 1923 and became Secretary of the Bengal Swarajaya Party; after C. R. Das's death, President of Swarajya Party and Leader of Congress Party in the Bengal Legislative Council; supported Gandhi and Motilal Nehru at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1928 which passed a resolution favouring Dominion Status; Mayor of Calcutta for five terms.

[2] Editorial titled 'C. R. Das at Faridpur' was published in *The Masses* Vol. I, No. 6, June 1925, pp.3-5. At the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur in May 1925, Das said among other things that 'the Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the Commonwealth in the near future' (N.N. Mitra, ed, *The Indian Annual Register*, 1925, I, 394). He defined Dominion Status as 'an alliance by consent'. The editorial condemned this as 'apostasy' and 'surrender' to the British.

[3] Presiding over the third session of the All-India Trade Union Congress at Lahore in March 1923, C.R. Das said : 'Labour represents 98 per cent of the population of India when we consider that labour also includes the peasants. Two per cent of the population cannot win swaraj. If it did so, I would emphatically refuse to accept such a swaraj. White or brown, bureaucracy is bureaucracy. That is why I have always claimed Swaraj for the masses': report of speech in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27 March 1923. Intelligence reports and contemporary accounts indicate that Das, in expressing this view, was to an extent influenced by Roy.

[4] The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party was founded at Minsk in March 1898. At its second Congress held in July-August 1903 under the Chairmanship of Plekhanov, first in Brussels and then in London, the Party split between Bolsheviks (majority) led by Lenin and Mensheviks (minority) led by Martov. The main point of difference was over the issue of the nature of the party organization—Lenin demanded a highly centralized body of disciplined professional revolutionaries while Martov advocated a relatively broad and democratically conceived organization. Martov's draft of the party statute was adopted at the Congress by 28 votes to 22 (the Congress was attended by representatives of 25 organizations having a total of 51 votes). However, before the Congress was over, Martov was outmanoeuvred by Lenin, and in the end Martov's group refused to take part in the elections to the Central Committee. That is how his group came to be known as Mensheviks.

Following Marx, Mensheviks held that the socialist revolution could be brought about only by a strong proletariat and that a bourgeois revolution would have to precede the socialist revolution. At the time of the 1917 February revolution the Mensheviks had a larger following in Russia than the Bolsheviks; more popular than either were the Socialist Revolutionaries who enjoyed support of the peasants. At the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets in June 1917, out of a total of 822 delegates, 'the SRs accounted for 285, the Mensheviks for 248 and the Bolsheviks for 105' (E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol. 1, 1973, p. 100). But in October the Bolsheviks seized power and in the next three years the Mensheviks were wiped out in the Soviet Union.

Alexander Kerensky was a Socialist Revolutionary member of the Duma at the time of the February revolution. A lifelong opponent of the Tsar, he became a minister of the provisional government after the abdication of the Tsar Nicholas II. By the beginning of July 1917, he was Prime Minister of Russia. After the October revolution he went underground for a brief period and then into lifelong exile. His *Memoirs* were published in 1966.

[5] Fourteen years later, in the context of the crisis at Tripuri and the resignation of Subhash Chandra Bose from the Presidentship of the Congress, Roy wrote a piece on Chittaranjan Das (1870-1925) in his weekly *Independent India* (30 July 1939) asking Congressmen to learn from the example of C.R. Das and not seek solutions in compromise and 'opportunist alliances'. He had personally known Das during his own revolutionary nationalist years when Das had not yet become a political figure, but had won fame by working as legal defence counsel for Aurobindo Ghose and subsequently in a number of political cases. Das joined the political movement in 1917 when he presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference, but it was from 1920 to 1925 that he completely dominated the political scene in Bengal and was recognized as Gandhi's principal rival in Indian politics. Roy tried to influence Das—in December 1921 he sent his 'Appeal to the Ahmedabad Congress' through his emissary Nalini Gupta, but it did not reach Das who was arrested before the session; he wrote personally to Das in 1922 and again in January 1923, besides addressing the famous 'open letter' and 'A Programme for the Indian National Congress'; he requested him to 'consider a trip to Europe' and sent a letter to Das's son Chiraranjan inviting him to come with credentials to the Fourth Comintern Congress. He had high expectations of Das, but Das's secret meeting with the Governor of Bengal, his public declaration a few days later expressing abhorrence of 'violence in any shape or form' (*The Indian Annual Register*, 1925, I, 87), his reply to the Secretary of State Lord Birkenhead's statement, and his Faridpur speech disillusioned Roy. The Swaraj Party, founded on 31 December 1922, split within two years of Das's death into the Responsivists and the non-cooperative groups. In the 1939 article Roy wrote that in 1922 he regarded Das 'as the incorporation of the spirit of revolt against the imposition of an essentially anti-revolutionary leadership upon an objectively revolutionary movement'. However Das's verbal reply to Roy's personal messenger was 'none too encouraging'. Das 'failed to mobilize the forces of revolt which might have followed him. . . His stormy political career ended in a sad anti-climax.' (M.N Roy, *Men I Met*, 1981, pp.21-25). SNR

M. Romain Rolland and the 'Asiatic Peril'*

M. Romain Rolland is the celebrated and exquisite ideologue who is trying desperately to save a culture which has clearly ceased to be 'viable'. The culture in question is that of the pacifist, pseudo- internationalist intellectuals who are not necessarily all in Europe. These intellectuals are an unhappy and miserable tribe, occupying the congested border-land where the double quarantine of two competing ideologies in mortal combat has isolated them. In their isolation and their grief, they turn on themselves with sadistic fury and go through infinite processes of morbid self-introspection which they call literature. In this, M. Romain Rolland is a past-master, as witness his anticipatory *Jean-Christophe*.[1] However it would appear that at the present moment he has become a particular prey to hallucinations. His soul is mightily troubled.

As a matter of fact, the trouble seems to have begun with his biographical effort on behalf of Mahatma Gandhi.[2] In the preface to *La Jeune Inde*, M. Rolland spoke of having seen a mysterious tide from India which was going to submerge all Europe. Barely had he recovered from this vision of a sub-tropical deluge extending to the Arctic North, when the noise of a great turmoil in China reached his ears. His historic mind must immediately have evoked the other vision of Chenghiz Khan and his Golden Horde marching through the Central-Asian steppes to overrun Europe. But the Indian and Chinese shocks to the mental equilibrium of M. Rolland are not all. On the very shores of France, so to say, a certain Abd el Krim has hurled his horde against the legions of France in Morocco, evidently to push back the 'frontiers of European civilisation'.[3] We do not know precisely if the highly wrought imagination of M. Rolland saw in Abd el Krim the phantom of the mediaeval Moor who fought Charles-Martel at Poitiers or that of the colonial Hannibal marching to the conquest of metropolitan Rome. In any case, M. Rolland has modified his earlier figure of speech. In a letter to the Paris monthly, *Clarté* (of the current month), he does not speak any more of the Asiatic deluge, he hints instead at an Asiatic Peril. He speaks of 'the immense insurrections of the races of Asia and Africa' and he foretells that all

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. I, No. 7, July 1925, editorial note. SNR

Europe—including Soviet Russia, as he takes care to add—is going one day 'to be destroyed' under the pressure of what he calls 'the roller of Asia'. We suggest to M. Rolland to try to change his categories of thought. Instead of thinking so exclusively in the terms of Asia and Europe, he might try to think in the terms of wage-slaves and capital, of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. He will then see that his imagined Asiatic Peril is neither distinctly Asiatic nor is it a peril except to capitalists (in both Europe and Asia). It is just the struggle of the working-classes of the whole world to free themselves from their common bondage to the same enemy. To conceive of this struggle in the terms of an 'Asiatic' menace to 'Europe' is an imbecile intellectual process, or perhaps, the criminal proceeding of an agent-provocateur working in the 'cultural' interests of capitalism.

Notes:

[1] *Jean-Christophe*, Rolland's highly popular '*roman-fleuve*', was serialized from 1904 to 1912 and published in ten volumes; the Modern Library edition in English comprises only the first four volumes. A committed pacifist, Rolland opposed the first world war and chose voluntary exile in Switzerland. The volume *Au-dessus de la melée* (1915) contains his pacifist essays. He was friendly to Barbusse, but Marxism did not appeal to him. His Indian heroes were Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Gandhi, and, with qualifications, Tagore; his European heroes being Michelangelo, Beethoven and Tolstoy. Roy had a brief encounter with him, but they did not take to each other.

[2] An English translation by Catherine D. Groth of the book on Gandhi by Romain Rolland (1866–1944) was published in 1924 under the title *Mahatma Gandhi : The Man who became one with the universal being*.

[3] Abd el Krim was the leader of the nationalist Rif forces who at first fought the Spanish colonial power in Spanish Morocco and then in April 1925 got involved in a war with the French colonial power in French Morocco. In June 1925 the Eastern Bureau of the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued a Manifesto against the war in Morocco, urging the French working class 'to force the French government to retreat and conclude peace with the Rif Kabyles (*Inprecor*, 12 June, 1925, V. 93, p. 1264). In May 1926 'Abd el Krim surrendered to a combined Franco-Spanish offensive'. SNR

Foundation of Democracy: The American Experience*

The American war of Independence is looked upon by the Indian Nationalists as a classical example of the struggle for national freedom. There is seldom to be found one Indian who is not thrilled to read the Declaration of Independence and think that the highest aspiration of the Indian people is to pronounce similar words. This remarkable Indian sympathy for the American Revolution has for its origin the fact that it was a struggle—and a successful struggle—against Britain, against whom India is rebelling today.

The American war of Independence, however, was not a struggle for national freedom. It was not a revolt of an oppressed people against foreign domination. The fundamental factors of this struggle were two: namely, 1) the scramble over the colonial spoils between the ruling class in Britain, on the one hand, and those scions of the same class that went out and settled in the New World; and 2) the revolt of the masses of the white settlers against the brutal exploitation by the landed aristocracy and the monied bourgeoisie. As a matter of fact the American war of Independence acquired its revolutionary character because of the predominance of the second factor in the earlier stages of the struggle. The first factor was very superficial and, without the second, might not have forced the struggle to the extent of separation from Britain. Moreover, the operation of the revolutionary second factor was checked and negativated by the first. The discontent of the exploited masses, effectively expressed through a revolt against the system of exploitation, won the battle. But the fruits of victory were presently misappropriated by a small class of landed aristocrats and monied bourgeoisie.[1]

Indian Nationalists can very well admire the American Declaration of Independence. That document embodied the voice of the exploited masses; better said, it contained sentiments that appealed to the prevailing mass discontent and inspired it to a revolutionary struggle for freedom. But the 'Independence' gained and perpetuated by the Constitution was not the independence declared in that noble document. The 'Independent' Government established by the Constitution liberated the colonial ruling classes from the overlordship of the mother country; but it rendered the Declaration of Independence a dead letter.[2] Therefore, to learn a lesson from history, Indian revolutionaries should do more than admire the American Declaration of Independence. They should not only study the evolution of the social forces that gave birth to that declaration but also the evolution of the other social forces that rendered that declaration a meaningless peroration. This study will lay bare the conflict of class interests behind all political movements. It will help the Indian revolutionaries to visualize the juxtaposition of forces in their own struggle, and consequently carry on the struggle more intelligently.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. I, No. 9, September 1925, unsigned article. SNR

The North American colonies of Britain were owned by a handful of scions of the British aristocracy. They were populated, in addition to paupers and convicts, by the peasantry expropriated in and driven out of Britain by the system of enclosure to facilitate the growing of wool. Ireland, suffering from centuries of British exploitation, also sent her quota. So, there was nothing in common between the two social elements that laid the foundation of the colonies that subsequently revolted and became the United States of America. On the contrary, a deep, insurmountable chasm divided them.

On the Atlantic seaboard of North America the British settlers did not find rich deposits of gold and silver as the Spaniards had found in Mexico and Peru. Nor were there the spices of the Orient which had fallen to the lot of the Portuguese and the Dutch. But they found vast stretches of virgin land which could be very profitably cultivated by the British peasantry, driven out of their land to make room for sheep. It was not with ease that the British peasantry, pauperized at home, could be herded across the ocean to produce profit for the colonial barons in a new and unknown world. The history of populating the American colonies was written in tears and blood. The expropriated and pauperized peasantry were driven to the alms-houses and jails of England before they could be shipped across the Atlantic to be sold there as slaves. The hope of getting on the land again gradually lured thousands to the New World, there to be submitted to slavery on the plantations, unless they were prepared to dare the savage Indians inland. It should not be overlooked that the same class-demarcation as obtained in the mother country, was also the basis of the society in the colonies. The newly-discovered possessions were given out by the English Kings to the nobility; that is, out in the New World, the toilers of the soil found themselves under the domination of the same class of people and the same system of exploitation, which in the old country had driven them off their land, pauperized them, herded them into debtor's prisons and sold them out to slavery in the colonies.

Before the Negroes came, the North American colonies had been built upon the labour of the White slaves sent over from Britain. Tens and thousands, including children of tender age were sold out to servitude for the passage money. In America, severe fugitive slave laws prevented the urge of those miserable multitudes to venture in the savage wilderness of the mountains in quest of free land. The land belonged to the aristocracy and the monied few—representatives of the ruling class at home. For the rest, it was to till and toil, to make the virgin waste bear fruit which went to swell the pockets of the owners.

It was in the midst of such conditions of slavery and exploitation that the clarion call of the Declaration was heard. 'All men are created equal; they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, and among these rights, are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'—these words of Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry (very few other leaders of the War of Independence subscribed to them sincerely) could not fail to appeal to the White serfs who rose in revolt.

Although the rebellion of the slave, the serf, the landless man and the small peasant with his free holding was the dynamics of the American War of Independence, the immediate cause of the war was entirely different. It was the clash of interests—the struggle for power—between the ruling class at home and their representative in the colonies. It was a scramble over the spoils. The enormous produce of the vast virgin waste, worked with unlimited slave-labour, had created great prosperity in the colonies; and on the secure basis of agricultural property, trade and industry began to thrive. Agrarian produce coupled with other raw materials and cheap slave (white and black) labour had laid the foundation of an industrial prosperity which threatened to be a rival of Britain. The monopoly of the Metropolis had been challenged. In short, the daughter had grown up and aspired to be independent of the mother in her social relations in the world of commerce and trade. The colonial nobility did not want to disown their allegiance to the crown of England but they refused to be the subjects of the subjects of the King. They did not like their economic interests to be subordinated to the interests of the metropolitan bourgeoisie. They demanded equality in their subjectship. It was, therefore, a disagreement on the division of the booty—a disagreement which might not have led to such a radical result had it not been for the fact that a tremendously revolutionary factor, altogether alien to that squabble over the spoils, was brought to bear upon the situation by the pressure of circumstances. As pointed out above, this revolutionary factor, which turned the scales, was the uprising of the slave-population, the landless men, against the system of exploitation, the internal conflict of which was the immediate cause of the struggle that ended in the Independence of America. The 'Independence', however, benefited those who did not want it, or wanted it rather half-heartedly; but left those who needed it, fought for it and won it, in the lurch.

The colonial aristocracy and the monied classes, in defence of whose interest the war was immediately fought, were numerically too small to man the army; of the serfs, slaves, landless men, stirred by the Declaration, was the army of Independence composed. These men, fighting not to vindicate the claims of the colonial bourgeoisie (by whom they were exploited), but, electrified by the offer of freedom from slavery and indentured labour, refused to give in till the final victory was won. To them belong the laurels of the Potomac and Bunker Hill—glories misappropriated by others.

Naturally, the forces, which had won the victory, made themselves felt upon the result of the victory. The result of a war waged to establish the independence of the colonial ruling class of their Metropolitan confreres, threatened to carry the doctrine of 'freedom and equality' too far. The Declaration had served the purpose of the colonial ruling class in rousing the masses with an ideal and making them fight and sacrifice for it. But the principles propounded therein could not be observed in practice without encroaching upon the sacred preserves of private property. Legislation in the spirit of the Declaration would be favourable to the debtors, workers, landless men, small farmers. Such a state of things would inevitably weaken the grip of the ruling class on the people. The War of Independence might have turned out to be a successful revolution.

The 'leaders of the Community', 'the fathers of freedom', were worried. They put their heads together to produce the Constitution of the United States of America. The Constitution of Independent America neatly scrapped the Declaration of Independence. The draft of the Constitution, which is supposed to be the practical rendering of the lofty principles contained in the Declaration, so much disgusted Thomas Jefferson (the author of the Declaration) that he wrote from France urging against its ratification.

The revolutionary tendency that characterized the governments of several of the thirteen States on the morrow of the War of Independence, produced constant clashes between the interests of the landless small farmers and ex-soldiers—men who had fought and won the war—on the one hand, and the interests of the bankers, landowners, manufacturers and merchants, on the other. The object of those who framed the Constitution was to settle these constant disputes in favour of the monied classes and to consolidate the position of the latter by establishing a centralized administration. In the opinion of Woodrow Wilson, 'the Federal Government was not by intention a democratic government'. 'In form and structure it had been meant to check the sweep and power of popular majorities. . . Hamilton sought to commend it chiefly to the monied classes.'

It is interesting and instructive to trace the evolution of American

Independence from the Declaration to the Constitution. The Declaration treats the people as a whole, and in vague but passionate terms, advocates the equality, right and liberty of man. If independence were to bring equality, right and liberty to the people of the colonies, the serfs, slaves, landless men and workers should have come in first; because they needed those boons more than anyone else. But the Constitution, in putting the principles of the Declaration into effect, totally brushed aside the question of equality, right and liberty for the masses of the population, and made the consolidation of the economic and political power of the ruling minority its basic issue.

In 1786, ten years after the War of Independence, the Legislature of Virginia invited the other colonies to a convention at Annapolis to discuss the possibility of unifying 'the trade and commercial system' of the colonies. The first outlines of the Constitution of the United States were drawn in that convention. 'Trade and Commercial System'—that was the basis of the Constitution! And the class controlling and benefiting by this system was to reap all the fruits of 'Independence'! Not a word about those miserable multitudes driven out of Europe, and imported from Africa—the multitudes of slaves and serfs that turned waste wilderness into prosperous colonies, that braved the savage Indians to reclaim new land, that fought for and won the independence! The noble sentiments expressed in the Declaration were mocked by the brutal realities of class interests which led to the promulgation of the Constitution.

The Annapolis gathering prepared the ground for the Philadelphia Convention which met the following year and issued the first draft of the Constitution. The delegates to the Convention to draft the Constitution were elected on property basis. And this basis was extremely narrow even in America in those days. For example, out of a population of 30,000, the city of New York had only 1,209 possessing sufficient property to acquire the right to vote in any election.

According to the official records of the period, 'an overwhelming majority—at least five-sixths of them—were to a greater or lesser degree economic beneficiaries from the adoption of the Constitution'. Not only was the Constitution framed by and in the interests of the monied minority, without any consideration of the rights and liberty of the toiling majority, it was, as a matter of fact, framed as a weapon to secure the ruling position of the minority as against any possible encroachment from the direction of the majority. James Madison, 'Father of the Constitution', said: 'The supreme danger will arise from the fusion of certain interests into an overbearing majority—the landless proletariat—which make its right paramount and sacrifice the right of the minority'. The framers of the Constitution were remarkably conscious of class interests, and did not make any mistake in producing an instrument of frank class-domination as against the vague sentiments of the Declaration which were relegated to memory.

Madison wrote:

'The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to uniformity of interests. The protection of these faculties is the first object of the government. From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors, ensues a division of society into different interests and parties.

The most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors and those who are debtors fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, grow up of necessity in civilized nations and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views.'

It is remarkable how clearly the doctrine of class domination is expounded here as a basic principle of democratic government! Brutality seems to be the characteristic of the American bourgeoisie. The bare-faced capitalist dictatorship that manifests itself in contemporary America has its ideological roots struck as deep in history as the days when the Constitution was promulgated by the 'fathers of freedom'.

Madison was not alone in explaining why the Constitution should be an instrument of bourgeois domination. The case was put even more strikingly by Hamilton. He said:

'All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and the well born, and the other the mass of the people. The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give, therefore, the first class a distinct, permanent share in the government. They will check the unsteadiness of the second, and as they cannot receive any advantage by a change, they will , therefore ever maintain a good government. Can a democratic assembly, who annually revolves in the mass of the people, be supposed steadily to pursue the public good? Nothing but a permanent body can ever check the imprudence of democracy. It is admitted that you cannot have a good executive upon a democratic plan.'

On such eminently aristocratic and autocratic principles was the 'Independence' of America reared! The Declaration was a noble document, but it only served to induce the exploited masses to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. It sublimely talked of 'equality and inalienable rights of man' when class-ridden society was the order of the day. The noble sentiments of the Declaration made the masses blind to their class interests while inspiring them to fight and win battles which strengthened the exploiting class. The latter, in their turn, went ahead with cool calculation and consciously erected an edifice of class domination on the basis of a document which talked of the colonial people as a whole, all 'born free and equal and with identical interests'. Indian revolutionaries would do well to learn the lesson of history.

Notes

[1] Roy was in the United States for about a year (1916–17), and in the 'Open Letter to President Wilson' (see *Selected Works, Vol. I*) which he wrote in 1917 he had stressed the affinity between India's struggle against the British and America's War of Independence. However, his experience in Mexico radically altered his view of the United States; there he saw 'the practical application of the Monroe doctrine' as establishment of 'a virtual protectorate over the New World' (M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, p. 124). In *The Masses* article he gave a Marxist interpretation of the American political system. Although unsigned, the style and argument of the article distinctly bear his stamp. His very critical view of the United States did not change significantly even after he had ceased to be a Marxist.

[2] The Declaration of American Independence was drafted by Thomas Jefferson and, after a few verbal changes had been made, it was adopted by the Congress on the evening of 4 July 1776. The Constitution was drafted eleven years later at the Federal Convention in Philadelphia (25 May to 17 September 1787), but signed by only 39 out of 55 delegates. However, after some contest, it was ratified by the States. Jefferson was abroad on a foreign mission and consequently could not take part in framing the Constitution. According to Luther Martin, a delegate who did not sign, the Constitution was 'a perfect medley of democratic, aristocratic and authoritarian elements'. Patrick Henry of Virginia opposed it because it 'squints toward monarchy'. Jefferson on his return, although persuaded by Washington to accept nomination to the department of state, was alarmed by the growing centralism of the political system. Committed to diffusion of power and a republic of mild laws and equal opportunity, he felt that 'the Federal Constitution . . . was being perverted into a consolidated, national government, building up through financial favours a corrupt control of Congress', (S. E. Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People*, 1965, p. 330). The discrepancy between the Declaration and the Constitution has been noted by many historians and commentators. SNR

THE AFTERMATH OF NON-COOPERATION

By

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Introduction*

The articles published herewith were written during the year 1923—a period that marked the collapse of Non-Cooperation and the rise of the Swaraj Party. They are not so many chapters of a book, but despite the variety of themes dealt with, there is an underlying continuity in them, because all the subjects treated are closely related and are of vital importance to the Indian movement.

Themes dealt with include such burning questions of our movement for freedom as the Programme of Nationalism, Tactics of Revolution, Constitutional Progress, Dominion Status, Communal Conflict, Mass Action, Class Antagonism and many other allied and minor issues. In short, the articles contain a critical study of the Nationalist Movement from every angle of vision as well as constructive suggestions on all the vital issues raised in the contemporary life of the Indian people. Therefore, though not a chronicle of facts, the following pages can claim to record the analytical history of the Nationalist Movement in the declining period of Non-Cooperation.

It will be noticed that our criticism of the programme, tactics and leadership of the Nationalist Movement, which might have aroused resentment in certain quarters, was very correct. The tendencies of weakness, compromise and reaction, pointed out by us so often, have all, in the fullness of time, seriously hampered the development of the struggle for freedom in a revolutionary way. Their accumulated effects killed a revolution.

It may not be already forgotten that only four years ago India stood on the brink of a revolution. There must be many who mournfully look back on those days and wonder how it has been possible to slide down from that pinnacle of revolutionary fervour to the present state of passivity on the part of the masses and willing surrender of the leaders. A critical and realistic examination of events alone can give a satisfactory answer to this query. Such an examination will show that such an imminent revolution was killed because the very ideology of the Nationalist Movement was counter-revolutionary, because the men who stood at the head of the movement were against a revolution. But for their active and conscious hostility to a revolution it would have been impossible for the British Government to survive the crisis of 1921–22.

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* From *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation* (136 pages) we reproduce here only the 'Introduction' which was written in September 1925. We also reproduce the table of contents with the pagination of the original 1926 edition to indicate the topics covered by the book. Nearly all the chapters were originally published as separate articles, and several of them have been already included in their original form in this volume. SNR.

More than one of the Nationalist leaders have admitted that towards the end of 1921 the movement was within an ace of success. 'The mightiest government was almost on its knees'. How were the tables turned? We have gone through the period of recrimination, when each held the other responsible for the debacle. The responsibility, however, was not individual. It was not the action of any one leader or any one wing of the Congress that 'bungled and mismanaged' the movement. The collective interests and efforts of an entire class did not allow the great popular upheaval to develop into a revolutionary outbreak.

In order to have a correct estimation of the situation, it should be kept in mind that the mass movement of 1921 was not defeated in the strict sense of the word. Repression failed to dampen the revolutionary ardour of the people until the morale of the Nationalist forces had been broken as a result of the Bardoli resolution. As a matter of fact, the Government was demoralized—a very good augury for a revolution. It felt the ground slipping under its feet. In that circumstance there was absolutely no necessity to hesitate, not to mention retreat. The only course was to push forward. Had the Ahmedabad Congress dared declare mass Civil Disobedience, the people would have responded enthusiastically. In fact the failure of the Ahmedabad Congress to give a courageous lead to the country demoralized the Nationalist forces. At the same moment when the masses were in a state of revolt—eager to go forward on the revolutionary way—the leaders failed them.

The counter-revolutionary policy adopted in those critical days is justified by the argument that a movement of mass Civil Disobedience would have been drowned in blood. It is only a hypothetical argument. Organized revolt of a great people cannot be crushed by repression. Those who put forward that argument and those who were convinced by it can look at China. Had the programme of Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience been carried out on the basis of mass action, a general strike all over the country would not only paralyse the civil administration, even military action would be rendered almost ineffective owing to the lack of transport facilities. The Government after all could muster at the most 150,000 white soldiers—the army and the civil volunteer forces taken together. With transport paralysed by means of a general strike on the railways, those forces would be like a drop in the ocean. Then there would be the Indian troops. A movement categorically committed to the abolition of agrarian conditions, which ruin our peasantry, would soon win the sympathy of the Indian soldiers who are all recruited from the poor agrarian population.

But the National Congress, as a whole, had never the intention of leading the movement in such a channel. From the beginning the Non-Cooperation programme was made impractical; on the one hand, by the emphasis laid on the cult of non-violence and, on the other, by divorcing it from any action on the part of the working masses. It is ridiculous to believe that the administration of a country can be paralysed by Non-Cooperation, unless Non-Cooperation means the suspension of the operation of all the productive forces. Non-Cooperation could only realize its goal, if it were preparatory to a nation-wide general strike. But the quadruple boycott on which the programme of Non-Cooperation was based did not call for any movement towards a general strike of the working masses. Then the programme as framed as propagated could never awake a sustaining action on the part of the working class because no consideration was given to their immediate grievances and remote aspirations.

Neither was the Non-Cooperation programme any better adapted to the agrarian conditions of the country. On the contrary, it was precisely on the agrarian issue that the reactionary basis of the Congress was revealed. Although the Calcutta Programme did not have any clause relating to the peasantry which was rising in revolt all over the country, 'non-payment of taxes' somehow came to be generally associated with the promised slogan of Civil Disobedience. It was never defined what was meant by 'non-payment of taxes'. But subsequent events—the famous Bardoli Resolution—however, made it quite clear what it did not mean. The Congress had never intended to organize and lead an agrarian revolution. Obviously, taxes payable to the Government, and not rents due to the landlords, were to be suspended, should the problematical Civil Disobedience ever be launched. 'Non-payment of taxes' would certainly be a revolutionary slogan; but its potentiality as a lever to inspire the peasantry is far inferior to that of the slogan of 'non-payment of rents'—a slogan never mentioned. The taxes paid by the peasantry are to a great extent indirect, whereas land rent together with other measures of exploitation, that accrue from the tenure-systems obtaining in India, weigh heavily on the bent back of the cultivator. The payment of indirect taxes cannot be suspended. For example, the payment of salt tax cannot be suspended unless the peasantry stop buying salt. The same applies to all indirect taxation. But the payment of land rent can be suspended with visible benefit to the peasantry. Therefore, the latter put their own interpretation to the meaningless slogan of 'non-payment of taxes'. They flocked under the banner of Non-Cooperation with the hope that the movement stood for the redress of their grievances as regards the burden of land rent and other exorbitant exactions of the landowners.

Additional burdens put on them to meet the cost of the war, together with the soaring prices in the years following, had intensified the discontent of the peasantry to the point of rebellion. Historically, the Non-Cooperation movement should have been the expression of this rebellion. In 1920-21 the masses (workers in the urban areas and poor peasants in the country) were in a state of spontaneous revolt. The Non-Cooperation movement, as a matter of fact, had its origin in this acute mass discontent. But its formal inauguration marked the betrayal of the generating forces. A movement, born entangled in such an unfortunate contradiction, could not have a happy ending.

In action, the Non-Cooperation programme, as formulated by the Calcutta Congress, could not keep pace with the events. The action of those two social classes (workers and peasantry), left out of the purview of the Calcutta programme, became the predominating feature of the movement. The 'hartals' during the Prince's visit were such imposing successes largely because of the participation of the working class. But mass strikes of purely political character always tend to develop revolutionary features. This happened in Bombay and subsequently in other cities. The Congress through its accredited spokesman, Gandhi, rushed to hold back, sabotage and finally denounce the logical development of the forces that were the dynamics of the Non-Cooperation movement. One cannot dissipate the life-blood and live hale and healthy at the same time. The movement reached its climax during the Prince's visit in November 1921, and it was at this climax that its internal contradiction became evident.

Things were moving even faster in the countryside. The Non-Cooperation programme failed to focus the agrarian situation. But the peasantry put their own revolutionary interpretation on the programme to the chagrin of the Congress. The belief that under Swaraj (which to the ignorant peasant was identical with 'Gandhi-raj') there would be no rent, no exaction by the landlords, electrified the peasantry. Flames of agrarian revolt flared up on the horizon. Once again the Congress cut itself asunder from the source of its dynamic strength. It wrecked itself on the rock of the agrarian question. By virtue of the Bardoli Resolution it divorced itself from the rebellious peasantry.

Thus, the Non-Cooperation movement fell a victim to its own internal contradictions. It was not defeated by the forces of repression. The Government stood before it in awe, until the pressure of these contradictions had dissipated, disintegrated and demoralized the Non-Cooperation movement.

Out of the ruins of Non-Cooperation rose the Swaraj Party which was the political crystallization of the social tendency which had clashed with the revolutionary character of the Non-Cooperation movement with such a disastrous consequence. It cannot be denied that the assassination of the revolutionary mass movement at Bardoli and its burial at Delhi simply prepared the way for the rise of the Swaraj Party. Divorced from mass action, Non-Cooperation would degenerate into political impotency. The restive forces of national revolution, apart from the working class, must find a channel of expression. The Swaraj Party provided it in the programme of parliamentary obstruction. The Swaraj Party saved the Nationalist movement from being transformed into a spinning guild or a prayer fraternity. The so-called constructive programme of Bardoli, which supplanted the original programme of militant boycott, could under no condition keep up a movement. With all its merit, the Swaraj Party was, however, essentially a move towards moderation. The most outstanding fact concerning it was that it replaced revolutionary mass action—even militant boycott—by parliamentary constitutionalism, as the weapon of the Nationalist struggle against imperialism.

To carry the warfare within the domain of the enemy was a method of fight certainly more energetic and more effective than the policy of leaving the enemy master of the situation. But a parliamentary fight is bound to be futile unless it were closely connected with and supported by extra-parliamentary action. It is much more so when the parliament is a mere sham as in India. The Swaraj Party, however, staked everything on parliamentary activities. The consequence of this blunder has been the present position, in which triumphant Imperialism insolently demands unconditional surrender of the Nationalist forces.

The tendencies of weakness, compromise and reaction, that 'bungled and mismanaged' the great mass movement of 1921–22 and turned the spectacular parliamentary feats of the Swarajists into airy nothings, are neither accidental nor individual. Their roots are struck deep in the social background of the Nationalist Congress. They assumed definite forms of expression in proportion as the contradictions of class interest inside the Nationalist movement became sharper.

The strikes and demonstrations during the Prince's visit confronted the National Congress with the necessity to choose between the capitalists and labourers. The Congress decided in favour of the former, although without the active participation of the latter no effective action against imperialism was possible. Next, the Congress had to choose between the landlords and the peasantry. By adopting the Bardoli Resolution it categorically took up the cause of the former, thus betraying the faith of the latter.

The rise and decline of the Swaraj Party also followed the same course. It came into being with the promise to win 'Swaraj for the 98 per cent', but became the champion of the 2 per cent, hardly before a year was over. Here again, the operation of class interest determined Nationalist politics. To make any show in the Legislature the Swaraj Party had to purchase the support of the moderate element. The price was to abandon all relation with the masses—to purge the programme of everything that did not exclusively stand for the interests of the bourgeoisie. The other alternative for the Swaraj Party would be to make parliamentary activities secondary to extra-parliamentary mass action. But the adoption of this course presupposed the faith in and the determination for a revolution. It was not the case with the Swaraj Party, which had been born in consequence of the repudiation of revolutionary mass action and from the very beginning had been pledged to constitutional progress as against revolution.

Those Nationalists, who uptil now lead the movement, may not like—or even be hostile to—revolution owing to reasons of class interest; but imperialism knows that the Nationalist movement is objectively revolutionary. It is now confident of being able to handle any movement not based upon the masses and not prepared to wield the formidable weapon of mass action. In the earlier days, British Government was afraid of the Swaraj Party. It had apprehensions that the Swarajists were going to back up their parliamentary action by popular agitation, demonstration and revolt. But once inside the Legislatures, the Swarajists changed their attitude so noticeably that the Government foresaw their collapse and adopted the policy of marking time while the Swarajists let off their steam. Before long, the futility of Swarajist tactics was exposed. Parliamentary procedures were obstructed to some extent; but they did not in any way shake the position of British imperialism which sat tight, always waiting for the opportune moment to strike.

The Swarajists had gone too far in the wilderness of parliamentary sham. They had roundly refused to organize any revolutionary action of the masses. At that moment, the Government acted in a real Machiavellian style. It declared its willingness to make economic concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie. Practical steps were taken in this direction. The Swarajists neatly fell in the trap. Imperialism began to work upon the feelings of the upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie through their pocket-book. Non-Cooperation had brought the country dangerously near revolution. Parliamentary obstruction had proved sterile. But cooperation was rewarded. The upper strata of the bourgeoisie, for whom the Swarajists had turned back upon the 98 per cent, looked upon the Swaraj Party as a disturbing element. The Parliamentary bloc with the Independents collapsed. The Swarajists were isolated. With the masses temporarily out of the political movement on the one hand, and the Liberals and Independents (even a section of the Swarajists) on the other hand eager to end the futile parliamentary deadlock, the opportune moment came for imperialism to go about the task of liquidating Swarajism with determination. It had only a beaten enemy to handle. The Swarajists, on their part, appreciated the precariousness of their position and began to throw out hints of their desire for 'honourable co-operation'. But it was too late. Imperialism demanded unconditional surrender. The peace must be made on the terms of imperialism.

Imperialism could succeed in the Machiavellian policy of disintegrating the Nationalist movement by virtue of its ability to bribe the upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie, on the basis of British monopoly concessions made to Indian capital. This policy is not likely to weaken the position of Britain in India, so long as political power remains in her hands. On the contrary, it will strengthen her position by reconciling the discontent of the Indian bourgeoisie. It is no longer profitable for Britain to hold India as a purely agricultural reserve. It will be more profitable to industrialize her. Industrialized India will offer lucrative investment for British capital; cheap labour and easily accessible raw materials will produce enormous profit; and the buying capacity of India will increase, thus helping British trade. The new economic policy of British imperialism demands an ally. The old allies—the decrepit feudal lords and landed autocracy—have become useless. Moreover, the function of the new policy will ruin them. The new ally is found in the upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie—the bankers, manufacturers and big merchants together with their political spokesmen, the prosperous professional class. This unholy alliance is directed against the Indian people. Indian capital will be granted a junior partnership in the imperialist concerns in return for its meritorious services in helping the stabilization of British domination over India.

The debacle of bourgeois Nationalism on the one hand, and the new economic policy of imperialism on the other, push the working class to the forefront of the struggle for liberation.

This is the fundamental thesis of the articles published herewith. It will be seen that events have taken the turn predicted by us. We do not pretend to be prophets. Marxist outlook on history and materialist interpretation of events enabled us to foresee which course Indian Nationalism was going to take.

The character of the upheaval—the course of a political movement—is not determined by any other agency than economic necessities. Indian people do not revolt against foreign domination to vindicate justice or honour or any other abstract principle. Economic necessities cause the revolt. The economic exploitation, however, is not felt uniformly by the entire Indian people. In the case of the bourgeoisie it has but a negative effect. British Imperialism has obstructed the capitalist development of India thereby injuring the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie. The latter do not do anything to produce the enormous profit that British capital makes by exploiting India. They are only deprived of that unearned income which would be their share, were the British not in India; while the real burden of exploitation falls on the masses. It is their labour that produces the profit for British capital.

Since imperialist domination affects two sections of the people so differently, there cannot be a uniform motive behind the Nationalist movement. Each class of Indian society carries on the struggle against imperialism egged on by its own economic necessity. The relaxation of the old policy of holding India in industrial backwardness greatly removes the grievances of the Indian bourgeoisie. They consequently become reconciled, at least temporarily, to British overlordship, especially when this overlordship protects India from a revolution which might challenge the system of exploitation of man by man. But there cannot be any reconciliation between the economic interests of the Indian masses and those of British Imperialism. They are mutually exclusive. Therefore, the political struggle of the Indian masses against British domination must be uncompromising. It must be a fight to the finish.

This being the case, the debacle of bourgeois Nationalism places the struggle for freedom on a different social basis. Henceforth the working class will not only be the dynamic force of the anti-imperialist movement (which they always have been), but will be the leading factor. And the vanguard of the working class—the industrial proletariat—will have the hegemony in the struggle. The proletariat cannot discharge this historical role creditably except through their political party. The party of the proletariat is the Communist Party.

The hegemony of the proletariat in the coming stages of the struggle for National Liberation, however, does not by any means eliminate numerous other social elements which will still play an important role. The hegemony of the proletariat consists of the ability of the proletarian party to make a close fighting alliance with all these forces of national revolution and place itself in the front ranks of a united anti-imperialist army. The proletariat will certainly perform this task, because it will fight uncompromisingly. 'They have nothing to lose but their chains, and a world to gain.'

September 1925.

Selections from

The Masses of India

Volume I, No. 12, 1925

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Cawnpur Congress—editorial—December 1925.
The Lessons of the Bombay Strike—unsigned article— December 1925.
The Nationalist Movement and Labour in China—unsigned article—December 1925.

Cawnpur Congress*

The reorganization of the movement for national freedom has been long overdue. The nationalist movement cannot be reorganized without a new programme. But the Congress has met year after year since 1922 without touching the all-important question of a programme adapted to the conditions of the country. As a matter of fact it has not even recognized the necessity of reorganizing the movement on the basis of a new programme. The Cawnpur Congress does not promise to be any more realistic than the last two Congresses—Belgaum and Coconada.

At the close of the year and on the eve of the annual session of the National Congress it will be useful to make a review of the political situation. This review will show that the nationalist movement has been constantly on the decline owing to the lack of a militant programme of action. It will also show that the Congress has been unable to arrest this decline because of its failure to adopt a revolutionary programme.

At Belgaum the political bankruptcy of Gandhism was admitted by the Mahatma himself. The Congress practically adopted the programme of the Swaraj Party. Although the Congress nominally maintained its own organization as distinct from that of the Swaraj Party (which formally was a member of the Congress), during the year following the Belgaum Congress, there has not been any nationalist political activity apart from that of the Swaraj Party. In one word, the Swaraj Party became the leader of the nationalist movement and its programme became the programme of the latter.[1]

It is a known fact that a considerable section of the Congress adherents did not fully subscribe to the Swarajist programme and tactics. The Mahatma did not voice the sentiment of the nationalist masses when at Belgaum he defined Swaraj as self-government within the Empire. Nevertheless the failure of the revolutionary nationalist elements, which aspired for complete national independence and were not satisfied with the limited field of activity prescribed by the tactics of parliamentary obstruction, handed the leadership of the nationalist movement to the Swaraj Party.

Under the leadership of the Swaraj Party the nationalist movement did not fare any better than before, because the Swarajist programme did not reflect popular grievances and popular demands. It is two years since the Swaraj Party inaugurated its programme of parliamentary obstruction to 'mend or end the bureaucracy'. It is one year since this programme received the official sanction of the National Congress. Today, this programme stands naked in its impotency. Many a parliamentary victory has been recorded to the credit of the nationalists during the two years since militant mass action was substituted by parliamentary action as the weapon in the fight for national freedom. But all these 'victories' have not brought the Indian people any nearer to national freedom than they were two years ago. In fact, India is much farther away from the goal of national freedom than she was in 1920–21.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. I, No. 12, December 1925, editorial. SNR

The experiences of the year during which the Swaraj Party has carried on its parliamentary activities with the mandate of the National Congress, prove conclusively that national freedom (even self-government within the Empire) cannot be won under the present programme of the Swaraj Party. The Swarajist programme has proved inadequate even to hold the party together, let alone the entire nationalist movement. Just as the impracticability of the programme of Gandhist non-violent non-cooperation led to the decomposition of the Congress within two years of the time when it had stood at the head of a mighty revolutionary movement, just so is the impotency of the programme of parliamentary obstruction leading to the disintegration of the Swaraj Party on the morrow of its spectacular parliamentary victories.[2]

The weakness of the Swarajist programme is in the fact that it does not make provision for backing up the parliamentary demands by militant mass action. Experience has shown it that without the pressure of a popular movement the government cannot be obliged to pay any heed to the nationalist resolution carried through the Legislature over the head of the bureaucracy. As soon as it was found out that the Swaraj Party was not capable—not willing—to back up its demands by extra-parliamentary mass action, Imperialism went over to the offensive and demanded unconditional surrender of the nationalists before any negotiation over eventual reforms could be begun. The nationalist movement, under the leadership of the Swaraj Party, has woefully failed to take up the insolent challenge of Imperialism. Any amount of loud talk cannot conceal the fact that Imperialism still refuses to take into consideration even the most moderate nationalist demand as embodied in the Nehru Amendment carried by the Legislative Assembly.[3]

As a last resort, the Swarajist leader, Pundit Motilal Nehru, has threatened that the nationalists would leave the legislature should the Government not accept their demand. This is a rather belated threat.

There can hardly be any doubt as to the government's attitude towards nationalist resolutions. Besides, the internal conditions of the Swaraj Party do not inspire the hope that the Pundit would have the entire party behind him if he carried out the threat. Then, supposing the Swarajists leave the legislature at this belated moment, what are they going to do? The next elections do not take place until the end of 1927. What is the nationalist movement going to do in the meantime? Obviously it will only carry on agitation and propaganda with the view to return a majority in the next elections. In case this is realized, the situation will be hardly changed. The nationalist majority in the Legislature would not find themselves any better fitted to enforce their demand unless they could back up that demand by popular action outside the parliament. Consequently, the crux of the situation is this: How to reorganize the nationalist movement on the basis of revolutionary mass action? The nationalist movement is faced with this momentous question.

So long as the Congress or the Swaraj Party will evade this all-important question, their inability to lead the struggle for freedom will not be removed. Once it is admitted that the success of the nationalist movement depends upon militant mass action, there arises the question of programme: on what programme can the masses be organized and led in the struggle for national freedom?

Over three-fourths of the population of India live on land. An infinitesimal minority of this agrarian population belongs to the land-owning class. The rest are the tillers of the soil. In order to attract this overwhelming majority of the population under the banner of the struggle for freedom, the nationalist party must have an agrarian programme. So far the Congress as well as the Swaraj Party have left this question, vitally affecting the major portion of the population, untouched. Still worse, whenever they have expressed their views on the agrarian question, they have shown their bias towards the land-owning class. In short, the agrarian programme of the nationalists, so far, has not only been negative, but reactionary. Consequently, except during the acutely revolutionary period of 1919–21, the peasant masses, constituting nearly three-fourths of the population, stood outside the nationalist movement. Here lies the cause of the weakness of the nationalist movement.

It is a well-known fact that the passivity of the peasant masses was the guarantee of British domination in India. So long as the peasant masses remained passive and looked upon the British Government as their protector, Imperialism could successfully cope with the discontent of the middle classes by brutal repression and satisfy the growing aspiration of the bourgeoisie by economic concessions and administrative reforms. Imperialist structure was shaken to its foundation in the years immediately following the war, because unbearable exploitation exhausted the traditional patience and passivity of the peasantry. The nationalists not only failed to develop that agrarian discontent into a mighty revolutionary upheaval against foreign domination and native reaction, but themselves became the enemies of the peasant revolt. That lamentable failure of the National Congress to encourage the seething peasant revolt by means of a revolutionary agrarian programme was the root-cause of the subsequent decline and confusion of the nationalist movement. By that failure, the National Congress contributed to the safety of Imperialism more than all the efforts of the government taken together.

Now, the agrarian discontent, acute outbursts of which shook the foundation of Imperialism in the years immediately following the war, has by no means disappeared.[4] The counter-revolutionary policy of the National Congress, coupled with the tenancy reform laws hastily enforced by the Government in provinces where the worst agrarian conditions obtained, smoothed the surface for the time being. But the root-cause of the discontent was not eradicated. Since last year, signs of a new agrarian upheaval are to be noticed on all sides. So much dangerous has the agrarian question become that land reform and agricultural improvement have become the slogans of Imperialism. In the struggle between Imperialism and nationalism, victory will be on that side which can count upon the peasantry. But the agrarian question is so complicated in India—the cause of the economic bankruptcy of the cultivating class is so deep-rooted—as to call for a veritably revolutionary change. Whoever will have the courage to head this impending agrarian revolution will have the support of the peasantry. To head this great revolution is the historic role of the nationalist bourgeoisie. But the gravity of the situation is inducing Imperialism to steal a march upon the nationalist bourgeoisie in this respect. If Imperialism succeeds in outmanoeuvring the nationalists, it will re-establish its influence upon the peasantry to the serious detriment of the movement for national liberation.

Property relations between the landowner and cultivator lie at the bottom of the agrarian question. All the multitudinous forms of exploitation to which the peasant is subjected, are determined by the basic factor of landownership. The agrarian question cannot be solved without a revolution in the ownership of land. This revolution will transfer the ownership of land from one social class to another—from the parasitic landlords thriving on unearned income to those cultivating it. Neither the Congress nor the Swaraj Party approaches the question affecting the great majority of the nation from this revolutionary angle of vision. For example, the Programme of Village Reconstruction of the Swaraj Party has not got a word to say about the necessity of a radical change in landownership. On the contrary, on many a previous occasion the Swarajist leaders have reassured the landed aristocracy of the friendly attitude of the Party. Besides, the infamous Bardoli Resolution still stands to the credit of the Congress, so also of the Swaraj Party, since the latter has not yet repudiated that resolution nor adopted an agrarian programme of a different nature.[5]

But, while reactionary inclinations do not permit the Congress and the Swaraj Party to approach the agrarian question courageously, Imperialism is fully awake to the danger and is preparing to launch a radical programme. The national Congress killed a revolution to safeguard the vested rights of the landed aristocracy. But Imperialism is preparing to throw overboard the landowning class—its loyal and tried ally. Political as well as economic exigency is imposing this bold policy upon Imperialism. On the one hand, in order to regain the confidence of the peasantry, the British Government must introduce land reforms, which will of necessity undermine the position of the landed aristocracy. On the other hand, the interests of imperialist capital demand a continual increase in the agrarian production of the country which, later in its turn, today necessitates a revolution in landownership. A rack-rented, indebted tenant-at-will is not a satisfactory agency of the capitalist exploitation of land. Imperialism will carry out this sinister programme with comparative ease, if the ground is left to it alone by the failure of the nationalists to place themselves at the head of the exploited peasantry with a revolutionary agrarian programme.

Commenting upon the appointment of an agrarian expert as the next Viceroy,[6] the *London Times* outlines the programme of the British Indian Government for the coming years. According to that authoritative organ of British Imperialism the agrarian question occupies the first place in this programme. It writes:

'But the problems which are emerging from the inevitable confusions of Indian development since 1914 are not all political. Prominent among them is that of the future of Indian agriculture, or, rather, of the Indian agriculturist, whose troubles are not solely due to the maintenance of an ancient or—as modernizing Indians would say—an antiquated social system. The balance of evidence suggests that the situation of the peasant who holds from the State, and is protected by it (as in the Punjab) against the excesses of usury, is more secure and satisfactory than that of the tenant in the many regions where absentee, incompetent, or inconsiderate landlords, unconscionable moneylenders, and the excessive subdivision and subinfeudation of holdings are distressingly frequent features of rural life. For political, and still more for financial, reasons, the conversion of the multitudinous tenants of many provinces into owner-cultivators is a present impossibility; it should not be impossible, however, to give them greater security of tenure and to improve their traditional methods of cultivation. The fact that agriculture is now a transferred subject certainly makes it harder for the Government of India to formulate any comprehensive scheme of agricultural betterment, but the appointment to the Viceroyalty of a Cabinet Minister with strong sympathies for the agriculturist and much experience of agricultural problems encourages the hope that a way will be found.'

The significance of these words cannot be missed. Although the right of landlordism is not openly threatened, considerable modification of that right is undoubtedly contemplated. This will be done certainly not in the interests of the peasantry, but 'to effectively dispel the myth that the (British) Government do not care for the masses', (to quote a leader of the officially inspired peasant movement).

A realistic view of the situation should induce the nationalists to seize upon a question which is causing so much anxiety to Imperialism. The reorganization of the nationalist movement should be mainly on the basis of a revolutionary agrarian programme. Agitation and propaganda carried on the basis of such a programme will place the nationalist movement at the head of a powerful peasant revolt which will be the backbone of the National Revolution.

The agrarian programme of the nationalist movement should be such a readjustment of landownership as will make the cultivator secure on his holding, lessen his burden of taxation, enable him to liberate himself from the tentacles of the usurer and make him the owner of the produce of his land. The Indian peasantry suffer from insecure tenure, excessive taxation and the exactions of the moneylender. Therefore, a programme to liberate them from this triple form of exploitation will be the rallying-point of the peasantry, that is, 70 per cent of the population. The struggle for the realization of that programme will be a gigantic mass movement which will strengthen the position of the nationalists, enabling them to impose their political demands upon Imperialism.

Can the Cawnpur Congress be expected to take any steps in this direction? We are afraid it cannot. The reorganization of the nationalist struggle must be undertaken by a party possessing a clearly revolutionary outlook.[7]

Notes

[1] *The Masses* editorial was written and published before the actual holding of the annual session of the Congress at Kanpur (Cawnpore) on 26 December 1925, under the presidentship of Sarojini Naidu. But prior to that session the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting at Patna (September 1925) had resolved that 'work in connection

with the Indian and Provincial Legislatures shall be carried on (by the Congress) in accordance with the Policy and Programme laid down by the Swaraj Party under the constitution framed by the Party and the rules made thereunder'. As the Gandhian historian of the Congress disapprovingly recorded, the Swaraj Party 'was no longer a wing of the Congress. It was the Congress itself. Therefore, elections would be run not by the Swaraj Party but by the Congress . . . at Patna, the Council Wing took the whole prestige of the Congress and took away the spinning franchise as well' (B. P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Congress*, pp. 487; 490). While handing over the Presidency to Sarojini Naidu, Gandhi lamented that there was no longer 'the fire and fervour . . . in the people', otherwise he would have commenced Civil Disobedience (Ib. pp. 498). The Congress authorized 'the Executive of the several Provincial Congress Committees to select candidates for the Provincial Legislative Councils and the Indian Legislative Assembly in their provincial areas for the general elections next year as early as possible' (Ib. p. 501).

[2] Shortly after C. R. Das's death the divisions and conflicts in the Swaraj Party grew acute. Tambe, the Swarajist President of the Central Provinces' Council, accepted an Executive Councillorship under the C. P. government. This was vehemently condemned by the Swarajist leader Motilal Nehru, but the principle of 'responsive cooperation' was backed by N. C. Kelkar, M. R. Jayakar, Dr. Moonje and other Swarajist leaders. Before the end of the year Kelkar and Jayakar resigned from the Executive of the Swaraj Party.

[3] In 1924, the government appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Alexander Muddiman to examine the working of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. In September 1925 Muddiman moved a proposition in the Assembly for consideration of his Committee's Report. Motilal Nehru tabled a long amendment to Muddiman's proposition. After two days debate the amendment was carried against the government by 72 votes to 45.

[4] The rebellion in the Gudem Agency in Godavari and Vishakhapatnam districts of Andhra, which started in 1922 but unlike the Moplah revolt did not take any communal character, became so strong that in 1924 'the Assam Rifles were sent for, consisting of about 250 officers and other ranks. The rebellion was ultimately put down after nearly three years of guerilla warfare', and its leader Sitarama Raju was shot and killed, allegedly while trying to flee from arrest. (Sitaramayya,, pp. 496–97).

[5] The no-tex campaign at Bardoli was started on 29 January 1922, but after the Chauri Chaura incident, the Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli on 11 and 12 February and, at Gandhi's instance, decided to call off the civil disobedience movement. Among resolutions passed by the Working Committee and subsequently adopted by the AICC (25 February 1922) were two which affirmed: (Resolution no. 6) 'the Working Committee advises Congress Workers and Organizations to inform the ryots that such withholding of rents is contrary to the resolutions of the Congress and that it is injurious to the best interests of the country' and (Resolution no. 7) 'the Working Committee assures the Zemindars that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights, and that even when the ryots have grievances, the Committee's desire is that redress should be sought by mutual consultations and by the usual course of arbitrations.' (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 22, 1966, p. 378).

[6] Lord Irwin, Viceroy 1926–31. He appointed the Royal Agricultural Commission and his negotiations with Gandhi led to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March 1931.

[7] Roy followed this with another article in the February 1926 issue of *The Masses* in which he reiterated what should be the principles and programme of 'the People's Nationalist Party': complete independence and establishment of a democratic republic on universal suffrage; abolition of landlordism and transfer of landownership to the actual cultivator; modernization of agriculture with state aid; nationalization of public utilities; abolition of indirect tax and increase of income tax; eight-hour day, minimum wages and laws for protection of labour; and freedom of speech, press and assembly (II, 2, p. 7). In the

March issue he again wrote editorially on 'The Cawnpur Congress' exposing how the President of the Congress had virtually, handed over her authority and functions to Motilal Nehru, the leader of the Swarajya Party, and how the political resolution moved by the latter was no more than 'bluff and bluster' to cover the policy of compromise and settlement. SNR

The Lessons of the Bombay Strike*

It is two months and a half since 150,000 workers of the Bombay Mills were thrown out of employment.[1] The end of this bitter struggle is not yet in sight. Most of those workers who have any land or relations on the land, have left the town for the villages. Those remaining in the town and its surroundings are faced with starvation.

The callous indifference of the nationalists towards the workers forced into this struggle against enormous odds is remarkable. All sorts of funds are raised by the nationalists for all kinds of purposes. But the sympathy and support for these victims of capitalist greed did not go beyond a few lukewarm newspaper articles. Naturally, nothing more could be expected from these nationalists to whom freedom of the nation means the freedom of the native bourgeoisie to exploit Indian labour. The nationalist press and nationalist speakers approach the Bombay Strike not as a brutal attack of capital on wages, but as a side issue of the age-long conflict between Indian and English capital over the questions of protection and excise duty. Even those, who profess to be on the side of the workers in this industrial strife, agree with the employers that the Indian cotton industry was on the verge of ruin, and demand the abolition of the excise duty as the panacea of the evil.[2] Now, this hateful impost is 3.5 per cent *ad valorem* as against an 11 per cent duty on import—a protective tariff. The loss which, according to the employers, the industry has been incurring during the years following the post-war boom period, will be but slightly affected were the 3.5 per cent excise duty abolished. However, in course of the negotiation preceding the cessation of work, the owners promised to abandon the threatened wage-cut as soon as the excise duty would be removed. From this it can be concluded that they would not attack the poor wages if the cost of production were reduced by 3.5 per cent. Since the mills were closed down in the first half of September, the price of raw cotton has gone down so much as to guarantee the equivalent reduction in the cost of production. The fall in the price of raw cotton will reduce cost of production of a pound of yarn by 3/4 annas—approximately the same reduction that will be effected by the removal of the excise duty. Again, the owners would realize this much reduction in the cost of production if they could enforce the 11.5 per cent wage-cut. This being the case, the fall in the price of cotton should ease the position of the textile industry and induce the employers to reopen the mills on the old wages. But the employers are as adamant as ever.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. I, No. 12, December 1925, unsigned article. SNR

By making the wage-cut conditional upon the abolition of the excise duty, the millowners sought to enlist the support of the labour movement in their conflict with British capital. In this design they have partly succeeded inasmuch as, in addition to the bourgeois nationalists, the labour leaders demand the abolition of the excise duty as the only means to solve the fierce strife in the textile industry. But the class differentiation has grown so sharp that the workers could not be induced to fight for the interests of the capitalists attacking their wages. In spite of their illiteracy and political backwardness, the effects of the process of tremendous accumulation of capital in the textile industry are visible to the workers.[3]

A few facts as regards the distribution of wealth among those connected with the Bombay textile industry reveal the economic background of class relations. These facts give the lie to the cry that the Indian cotton industry is on the verge of ruin—a cry frequently joined by the labour leaders. It is a fact that there is a depression in the industry. But every period of boom is followed by depression. It is the law of capitalist production. If the profit made in the boom period were spread over these two years of depression, the apparent annual loss of 2.8 crores would disappear and a much bigger profit would be shown. In the three years ending 1920, the total net profit of the Bombay mills amounted to 36.41 crores. The total capital invested in those mills is 20 crores. That is, only in three years, the capital was nearly doubled without taking into consideration the profit made up to 1917. In comparison to this tremendous profit, the annual loss of 2.8 crores for two years can hardly be ruinous to the industry. At this rate, it will be eight years before the clear profit made over and above the complete recovery of the capital invested, is exhausted. Under such circumstances it is not possible to have the locked-out workers back up the demands of the owners for the abolition of the paltry excise duty. So the political motive of the employers miscarried, even if the labour leaders championed their cause.

An industrial dispute caused by such an unequal distribution of wealth is bound to be very sharp. The obstinate refusal of the starving workers to resume work on the employers' terms is the primitive expression of class antagonism. By this refusal the workers mean to say that labour has nothing in common with capital—that either the one or the other must have its own way; and that there is no room for reconciliation.

Side by side with the callousness of the nationalists, the failure of the labour leaders to lead the workers in this bitter resistance to capitalist offensive is also remarkable. A movement inspired by such a pronounced class antagonism can naturally not be led by men hostile to the idea of class struggle. Failing to move the employers by supplication and the government by memorials, the leaders advised the workers to return to their villages and those who have no place to which to return, to throw themselves upon public charity. The 'activities' of the labourites reached their climax in the last deputation to the governor which pleaded for a subsidy to the industry and a commission of enquiry into the economic condition of the industry. Indian labour leaders, obviously, had the settlement of the English coal strike in mind while making these propositions. Apart from the fact that in the case of the English coal strike, the proposal for a temporary agreement did not come from the miners, Indian labour leaders had not done anything to force their proposal upon the government. In England it was the government who intervened when the situation had become extremely critical. At the end of the negotiations Churchill dramatically gave out the secret of the situation. Addressing the Secretary of the Miners' Federation, he said: 'Remember Cook, it is not a charity. It is cheaper than revolution.'

Had any step been taken by those who pretended to lead the movement towards the creation of a similar situation? Absolutely none. The labour movement—the Trade Union Congress—left the Bombay workers to struggle alone. Absolutely no attempt was made to organize sympathetic action, not even of the workers in the same industry. No agitation and propaganda were carried on among the workers to crystallize their primitive class-consciousness into a revolutionary class struggle. The victory of the English miners was not due solely to organization, as is held by those Indian labourites who discourage all revolutionary action on the plea that Indian labour is not organized. Undoubtedly organization is of first rate importance and the working class must organize itself to win the final victory. But there are other factors which are equally important. For example, in 1921 the Miners' Federation of Great Britain was not any weaker in organization than in 1925. Nevertheless they lost. Other revolutionary factors that contributed to their victory in 1925 did not operate on the previous occasion. In 1921 the miners were defeated because they were left to fight alone. In 1925 they broke down the resistance of capitalism by virtue of the support of the entire working class. This united action was brought about by tireless revolutionary agitation and propaganda. Agitation and propaganda are as important as organization. They are of more importance inasmuch as all organization work must be preceded by a period of agitation and propaganda.

Moral and material support came from the proletariat in other countries; but no attempt was made to call upon the Indian working class to come to the aid of their comrades of Bombay.[4] Appeals were made to the nationalist bourgeoisie (whose sympathy must be with the millowners) for charity. The futility of this misdirected appeal was shown by the fact that hardly 2000 rupees were raised. Indian workers engaged in other industries could give little financial aid to the victims of the capitalist offensive in Bombay; but they could give much more potential aid. If vigorous agitation and propaganda were made on the basis of class interest, if the labour leaders acted as the vanguard of the working class, if the Trade Union Congress existed otherwise except in name, hundreds and thousands of workers in other industries could be called out to strike in support of the Bombay men.

Instead of taking any step in this direction, the labour leaders sought to play high politics in which they only championed the cause of Indian capital. Supposing that the Government of Bombay or of India followed the example of the British Government and agreed to subsidize the cotton industry, whence would the money come from? It would not be imported from Britain. Subsidy to the cotton industry would cause further taxation. In other words the already slim pocket of the Indian masses would be encroached upon to satisfy the greed of the Bombay millionaires.

Then there is the request for an Enquiry Committee. Is there anything to investigate? The cry about the ruin of the cotton industry is all nonsense, as shown from the facts quoted above. The bogey of Japanese competition is also a lie. Of the 200,000 bales of cloth in stock on the eve of the lockout more than 50,000 were cleaned out in two weeks since the mills were closed. If the Indian mills could so successfully compete with Japanese goods when standing idle, they could certainly hold their ground under normal conditions. In spite of the increase in the imports from Japan, the output of the Indian mills increased from 1064 million yards in 1914 to 1719 million yards in 1924. Still the present supply (Indian, Japanese and British all taken together) is 845 million yards less than the pre-war consumption. If there was truth in the bogey of Japanese competition, to close down the mills would be the worst thing to do!

As we have pointed out from the very beginning, the crisis in the Bombay textile industry was artificially created for political purposes. The Indian bourgeoisie wanted to have the last impediment (excise duty) on the textile industry removed. In order to force the hand of imperialism, they threw into the struggle the weight of 175,000 starving workers by provoking an industrial conflict. This cold-blooded method would not work had it not been also to the interest of imperialist capital to abolish the excise duty. Japanese competition cuts more under position of British imports than Indian manufactures.[5] During the financial year 1924–25 the imports of yarn from Japan and England were respectively 32,325,000 and 20,760,000 pounds; cloth: 155 and 1600 million yards. Judging from the figures of import in the first part of the current year the share of England will decrease by 6,000,000 pounds of yarn and 35,000,000 yards of cloth. Japan can be thrown out of the Indian market only when cloth supplied by her can be produced in India. Comparative dearness of labour, importation of raw cotton and exportation of woven goods over long distances make it impossible for Lancashire mills to compete with Japan in Indian markets. If British capital wants to keep its hold on the Indian market, it must build cotton mills and produce a higher quality of raw cotton in India. Preparations for the growth of long-staple cotton in India are well on the way. The next step will be to build mills with English capital to fabricate this cotton. The protection given to the Indian textile industry will, therefore, no longer operate against British capital, but against the Japanese competitor. Indeed, it will be a protection to British imperialist interests. It is possible that British Imperialism would not hurry to inaugurate this new policy as regards the cotton industry unless it is forced by factors other than normal economic considerations. The Bombay capitalists provoked the present industrial dispute and are determined to prolong it in order to supply an extraordinary factor. On his return to India, Lord Reading received the millowners' deputation and, discussing the condition of the cotton industry, promised to consider favourably the demand for the abolition of the excise duty. This encouraged the cotton magnates, who nevertheless threw their wage slaves to the jaws of starvation. The fabulous profits made during the boom period enabled the owners to keep the mills closed for a few months.

The Bombay lockout was caused by a clearly class issue. 175,000 workers were used as a pawn in the duel between native and British capital. The labour resistance, on its side, should have been organized on an equally clear class issue. But that could be done only under the leadership of a proletarian party. The debacle of the Bombay strike is another of those innumerable facts that prove that the Indian proletariat must have their own political party.[6]

Note: Since the article was written, the news has come that the British Government has agreed to abolish the Excise Duty from January 1926.

Notes

[1] The Bombay Textile Workers' strike officially began on 15 September 1925 and ended on 1 December 1925. In fact, even before September, 56,000 workers in the textile industry were already on strike. According to intelligence reports, out of a total of 154,000

textile workers, 150,000 joined the strike (David Petrie, *Communism in India*, 1972 reprint, p. 263). The total 'mandays' lost was 11 million.

[2] In March 1925 the Swarajist-Independent majority in the Legislative Assembly had passed a resolution demanding abolition of cotton excise duty. When, in response to the cut in the dearness food allowance to textile workers, the strike started, the Bombay Municipal Corporation appealed to the government to suspend the excise duty.

[3] When in 1924 the Bombay textile millowners decided not to pay workers the annual bonus on the ground of depression, it led to a strike in the industry which lasted from 15 January to the middle of March 1924. It also involved 150,000 workers; and 7.75 million 'mandays' were lost. The strike was not successful but it 'was greater in its proportion than any previous strike in the country'. Roy wrote on the strike in *The Vanguard* (Vol. 4, Nos. 3 & 4, No. 5 and No. 6; 15 January and 1 February; 15 February; 1 March 1924).

[4] According to intelligence reports, sums received for the help of the strikers were: Rs 6,472–10–0 from the British Trade Union Congress; Rs 17, 591–5–4 from the International Federation of Trade Unions, Amsterdam; Rs 6,049 from the International Federation of Textile Workers' Association, London; and Rs 13,832 from the Moscow Textile Workers' Union. 'The total effect of these contributions . . was negligible, in view of the great number of men involved' (Petrie, ibid, 205–6). The amount raised in India for the strikers' fund was about Rs 1300.

[5] 'Although the cotton excise was originally introduced to placate the Lancashire cotton magnates, they accepted its suspension in 1925 almost without a murmur. This was because they recognized that they had suffered more from Japanese than from Indian competition'. (Vera Anstey, *The Economic Development of India*, 1957 impression, p. 263, fn 3.)

[6] While the Congress did hardly anything to support the strikers, Gandhi in September 1925 speaking to the textile workers of Ahmedabad congratulated them on their appreciation of the difficulties of the millowners and expressed his belief that if the crisis deepened 'loyal labourers' would 'come forward with an offer to serve without any wages in order that mills may not have to be closed down' (*Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 162). Gandhi's view was sharply attacked in *The Masses* (Vol. I No. 11, November 1925, 'A Different View', p. 2). SNR

The Nationalist Movement and Labour in China*

The Textile Workers and their Struggle against the Capitalist Offensive

The first place in the Chinese labour movement, from the point of view of activity and organization, has until lately been held by the railwaymen, seamen and miners. To be sure, there have been sporadic strikes of textile workers in the past as well, but they were generally shortlived and, owing to weak organization, ended as a rule in defeat. The main cause of the organizational backwardness of the textile workers is the domination of female and child labour. It will suffice to state that in many of the largest textile factories women constitute 90 per cent of all the workers. In the silk industry the percentage is still higher, reaching even as much as 99 per cent. About half the workers consist of children.

This explains why Shanghai, the foremost industrial centre of China, where is concentrated one-third of the entire industrial proletariat of the country, has not until recently played any noticeable part in the Chinese labour movement: of the 500,000 workers of China, the cotton workers (160,000) and silk workers (80,000) constitute nearly one half. In addition, the next largest group, the porters (100,000), are also not easily given to organization. Only after the Peking coup last autumn, in connection with the new political situation and with the rise of the nationalist movement in Northern and Central China, did the backward Shanghai proletariat begin to move.

The birth of the first trade union organizations among the Shanghai textile workers dates back to the second half of the past year. The first to be organized were the workers of certain Japanese textile factories, where men constituted a relatively high percentage. There were four such factories and they formed the nucleus of the textile workers' organization.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. I, No. 12, December 1925, unsigned article. At the end of the article there was an announcement that the article would 'be concluded in the next number'. However, no concluding part was published in the next or any other number. In spite of its incompleteness the article is included here in view of Roy's involvement in Chinese developments in 1927. It is not certain if this article was written by Roy himself, but its argument and style suggest his authorship. SNR

The Japanese capitalists immediately saw a menace in the organization against them. They started a determined offensive against them. The biggest Japanese textile company, *Nagai-Wata*, owning 13 textile factories in Shanghai and two in Tsintao, began systematically to replace the men by women, increasing at the same time the standard of production, and discharging, under various pretexts, the most active men. This led to the February strike involving all the factories of this company. Despite the cry raised by the entire imperialist press over this strike, despite all intimidations and provocations, despite attempts to corrupt the strike leaders and despite even the formidable intervention of the Japanese Ambassador, the strikers held out valiantly, and after eleven days of struggle came out partially victorious.

This success served to raise very high the prestige of the Union in the eyes of the workers and in a short time the union movement made very good progress, the membership growing from 2,000 to 10,000.

Two months later, in April, a strike broke out in the Japanese textile factories of Tsintao. The Japanese capitalists decided to show their teeth in Tsintao, a small town in the Shantung province, only recently evacuated by the Japanese, where they found it more safe to use force and easier to browbeat the workers.

In response to these events a second strike was declared in Shanghai by the textile workers, in solidarity with the striking textile workers of Tsintao. The Japanese capitalists then decided to apply the same ferocity in Shanghai. Clashes followed, in which the Japanese foremen killed one and wounded 30 Chinese workers.

On 30 May a peaceful demonstration, held by the workers and students in protest against the murder of Chinese workers by the Japanese, was fired upon by the British police of the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai. This served as a prelude to the Shanghai events, which reverberated so loudly in every country, leading to the unheard-of rise of the national movement that is still gripping the whole of China today.[1] In this rise, there is reflected the entire nationalist and labour movement of the last decade. During that period the movement was having its ups and downs, first in the stormy onrush on to the political stage of the student movement in 1919 [2] and in the splendid activities developed by the young Chinese proletariat, such as the strike of the Hong Kong seamen in the spring of 1922 or the Shanghai strike in 1924, and then the movement, during periods of reaction, would disappear underground, engaging there in invisible activities and gathering volume and energy for the next outbreak. The events of this summer represent one of this series of outbreaks. Their mainstay are the strikes in Shanghai and Hong Kong.

The Result of the Strikes in Shanghai and Hong Kong

The distinctive feature of the mass Shanghai strike that has been carried on for fully three months is that in it two currents, nationalist and labour, merged into one powerful stream.

The first results are extremely favourable to the fighting Shanghai workers. Such points of the settlement between the Chinese Seamen's Union and the Japanese shipping companies, as the re-instatement of all the strikers, the payment of wages for the entire period of strike, the forthcoming negotiations for wage advances, signify an indisputable and important, though not complete, victory for the Chinese seamen. The Textile Workers' Union apparently came to a similar agreement with the Japanese textile companies (full information is not available at the time of this writing).

It was not with a light heart that the Japanese capitalists and the Japanese Government, which took a very active hand in this conflict—the negotiations on behalf of the Japanese company were conducted by the Japanese General Council in Shanghai—granted these concessions. 'The paradise for employers' mentioned in the report of the British Consul is apparently disappearing in China. The Chinese worker, whom the Japanese capitalists only recently could mercilessly exploit without meeting resistance, whom the Japanese foreman could beat and intimidate with impunity, has begun to rebel. Worse than that, he has even set up trade unions, formed councils and federations that must not only be recognized, but which even force one to retreat.

This victory of the Chinese workers is the more obnoxious to the Japanese bourgeoisie in that it will undoubtedly be reflected in Japan itself and strengthen the revolutionary wing of the Japanese labour movement.

We do not know the exact losses sustained by Japan in the three months of strike and in the boycott of her goods. As has been mentioned, the 1919 boycott resulted in the trade between Japan and China being reduced by 40 per cent. The losses caused by the present strike and by the much more effective boycott are undoubtedly incomparably larger. This, apart from the more general politial motives, lie at the root of the present Japanese 'leniency'.

Japan's decision to seek a reconciliation with the Chinese workers through serious concessions *greatly weakens the position of the British capitalists in the strike*. The losses sustained by Great Britain are tremendous. This is seen in the drastic falling off of the exports of the Lancashire textile industry, in the complete paralyzation of British shipping in the Pacific. Each day of the Hong Kong strike alone, according to the Hong Kong correspondent of the London *Times*, causes a loss of 250,000 pounds; the Hong Kong losses for the two months' strike are equal at least to 15 million pounds. Wholesale bankruptcies have become the order of the day in Hong Kong, and even the most solidly established firms are experiencing serious difficulties and are cutting down their forces. Panicky Hong Kong has been bombarding London with telegrams demanding immediate military intervention in Hong Kong, the crushing of the Chinese Bolsheviks, of the 'Moscow bandits' who have seized power in Canton, who destroy civilization and culture, lead China to its doom, etc. But London is 'reluctant'. True, fresh troops have been brought up to Hong Kong from India, a special warship loaded with hydroplanes arrived from Malta. Still London is practically inactive. Moreover, London is actually preparing to commit 'treason' and seems to be inclined to compromise, to make concessions to the 'rebellious slaves'.

Britain's Isolation

From the very first and to the very last England has been pursuing a policy of threats and violence. However, there are already signs to the effect that England, preparing with one hand for intervention, is ready to stretch out the other with an olive branch in it. This is indicated in the recall of the Hong Kong governor, *Sir Reginald Stubbs*, notorious for having introduced corporal punishment for 'agitators', whose name fills with pride the heart of every imperialist jingo, but who has become hateful to the Chinese masses, as a symbol of British arrogance and of the most ruthless colonial oppression. This arch-imperialist, with whom the representatives of labour would not think of dealing, has been removed from Hong Kong and transferred to Jamaica. Even the very tone of the British press, after three months of threats and provocation, has changed. It will suffice to compare several extracts from the leading British organs.

The *North China Daily News* of Shanghai, a semi-official press organ of British imperialism, wrote as follows in regards to the efforts of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai to find a compromise in the conflict: 'As for the merchants of Shanghai we appreciate their efforts to restore peace, but . . . we tell them frankly that they are wasting their time. There is only one way in which peace can be restored, and that is by the unconditional surrender of the students and other agitators'. Such was the attitude of the British organ in June. In July the paper deciphered the meaning of the 'surrender of the agitators' by openly and persistently demanding capital punishment for them. Hong Kong, where Sir R. Stubbs, referred to above, did not hesitate at shooting the active workers, was offered as an example to Shanghai.

However, at the end of August, when the front of the Shanghai and Hong Kong workers remained, as at the beginning, firm and unshaken, while Lancashire in England and Hong Kong on the Pacific were feeling more and more acutely the crushing blows coming from the Chinese strikers and the unabated boycott of British goods, the British press found a new language:

'While the diplomats are disputing and frittering away valuable time'—bitterly complains the London *China Express and Telegraph*, a journal closely associated with the Colonial Department—'the boycott has reduced the normal movement of British goods by 80 per cent, (issue of 6 August 1925).

The diplomatic parleys really accomplished nothing of practical value, at least from the standpoint of the interests of British imperialism. All the efforts to line up America and France failed completely. Japan, who at one time followed in the wake of England, finally compromised and parted ways with that country, taking up the path of agreement, at a costly price to herself.

There was a time in the happy days of Lord Palmerston, when Britain was deliberately striving for 'splendid isolation'. Today this isolation is a fact, established against her will, and it is far from splendid, and the latest articles of the same London weekly reflect this black mood of sobered imperialism, while the Conservative Government finds it necessary to prepare 'public opinion', but more particularly the arrogant Hong Kong bankers and shipping interests, the Shanghai Municipal Council, the British Chamber of Commerce, which represent the most diehard elements of British imperialism in China, of the necessity to seek a compromise, to agree to concessions.

'. . . The British Government recognises', the London Weekly writes in an evidently inspired editorial on 27 August, 'the real grievances from which China suffers and is anxious to remove these with the least possible delay'.

'It is admitted', continues the editorial even more outspokenly, 'that the treaties are out of date and must be revised and it is obvious that the principle of extra-territoriality must be modified in face of the new China'. (*China Express and Telegraph*, 27 August).

So that is how the influential London circles began to see light.

And this tremendous work of 'enlightening' has been carried out by the plain, illiterate Chinese coolies, by the Shanghai and Hong Kong strikers, by the dockers, seamen, textile workers, under the leadership of the Shanghai Trades Council, and of the All-Chinese Federation in the South.[3]

Labour in the Van

The Shanghai Trades Council was formed at the very outbreak of the strike, soon gaining general recognition as the centre of the labour movement. Its popularity not only in Shanghai, but throughout the country is enormous. To it flock with their various problems and difficulties not only the labour organizations and various groups of workers, but all the various institutions; the civil and military authorities negotiate with it, the entire stored-up hatred of the imperialists has been focused upon it, and they are constantly working to undermine it with all the means at their disposal. The Shanghai Trades Council is the leading light in the Joint Committee consisting, in addition to the Council, of the Student Council and the Committee of the Street Union which comprises petty businessmen. The Trades Council has not only developed great propagandist and organizational activities among the strikers but, with the aid of its daily, devoted to political and trade union affairs, and of the specially created Press Bureau, which circularizes all the Chinese newspapers with daily information bulletins, it has exercised a decisive influence in the moulding of public opinion and in the growth of the national consciousness of the Chinese masses. Its prestige among the Shanghai workers is unchallenged. The latest events have proved this beyond any doubt. Only because it enjoys the complete confidence of the great masses of the Shanghai workers was the Trades Council able to put through such a complicated manoeuvre as was that of shifting from the fundamental national demands to economic issues, and retaining at the same time the integrity and solidarity of the proletarian front. For it must not be forgotten that, apart from the enormous outside difficulties, the very make-up of the body of strikers contains within itself tremendous handicaps for the mere direction of the strike, and even more so for the execution of drastic strategic turns. Indeed, the main body of the strikers consists of textile workers, seamen and dockers. As a whole the strike movement has rallied entirely untrained sections of the proletariat that have only recently got into touch with any movement. The art of manoeuvring such masses, of making sharp turns, requires, in addition to a certain political maturity, cleverness and tact on the part of the leaders, and also, and particularly, complete confidence in them on the part of the masses.

The main body of the strikers was made up, as is known, of the workers employed in British and Japanese establishments. The latest despatches indicate that the strike in the Japanese factories has been settled in a manner denoting a serious, even if incomplete, victory for the workers. The workers of the British establishments still continue to strike. This again bears witness to the strong contact existing between the Council and the labouring masses. Only this contact permits of such an organized, step-by-step liquidation of this grand strike, when one section of the front is being liquidated, while at the others the struggle continues unabated. The entire weight and force of the struggle will now be concentrated against Britain, and this is the best guarantee that on this front as well the Shanghai workers will be victorious.

The Hong Kong strike, though a direct continuation of that of Shanghai has, however, one distinct aspect: its character is purely political, it being a clear expression of the national emancipation struggle conducted by the revolutionary means and methods at the disposal of the working class.

It is hardly possible to name another place on the Pacific where British imperialism has been revealing itself more nakedly, more insolently, than in Hong Kong. A handful of big capitalists, backed by an adequate military force under the command of the Governor, is having full and unlimited sway on the Island. There is one trouble however: within six hours' travel by steamer, on the opposite shore is Canton (the capital of the Kwantung province, with a population close on 40,000,000), the foremost revolutionary city in China, with its Kuomintang Government, friendly to Soviet Russia; a city where the labour movement is developing freely, and where a revolutionary army of workers and peasants has been created.[4] In short, a city that is the very opposite of Hong Kong, which hates it, with the deepest hatred as a hotbed of the 'Bolshevik germ' that is spreading throughout China, portending nothing good to the Britishers. The working population of Hong Kong, in turn, have nothing but the profoundest hatred for their haughty oppressors and look with hope to Canton, with whom they maintain the liveliest connections. No wonder that it was precisely in Hong Kong that the Shanghai events aroused not only a sympathetic, but a more effective response. The proximity of Canton played a decisive part.

The Hong Kong strike was led by the Executive Committee of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. The latter is a very young organization, formed at the All-China Trade Union Congress early last May. Backed by the active support of the Canton masses and of the government, the Federation Executive has been successfully handling this extremely difficult problem.

The Hong Kong strike—and this must not be forgotten—is limited to a small island, dominated by a true despotism with the entire power, both civil and military, concentrated in the hands of an autocratic British governor. Nor should it be forgotten that the Hong Kong strike hits the pockets of the British capitalists more painfully than that of Shanghai, where the Japanese interests are more directly affected. And finally, it should also be remembered that the Britishers wanted to make of Hong Kong an example of the superiority of their methods of quelling disturbances. There is much 'interference' in

Shanghai on the part of other countries, and this leads to a lot of red tape and wavering; in Hong Kong, however, there is a 'purely' British rule, which knows what it wants and how to get it. Yet despite the fact that the authorities really did not stop at anything, including shootings, corporal punishment and mass deportations; despite the fact that they recruited scabs everywhere in the Philippines, in the adjacent Portuguese colony of Macao, etc,; in spite of the fact that even the Russian white guards were rallied to this glorious business of strike-breaking; despite all this, the Hong Kong strike, led by the Canton Federation, turned into a general strike affecting every branch of employment.

As a result, after two months of struggle, Hong Kong is ruined. Unable to crush the strike unaided, Hong Kong has been appealing to London, demanding intervention, military interference, an occupation, or at least the complete blockade of Canton. As has already been stated, there is every ground to believe that these militant outcries will hardly be heard in London. The Conservative Government is, of course, 'at heart' with the Hong Kong reactionaries, but conditions at home and abroad, particularly in China, are such that England will hardly dare to decide upon an intervention in Canton. A war with Canton would be a challenge to all of China. For the Chinese masses have become a nation.

The Birth of the New, Free China

The traditions of provincialism and clannishness are still, as a matter of fact, strong in China. However, within the womb of old China, a new China has arisen. Owing to industrialization, its life has been revivified, 'modernized'. The growth of cities, the development of railways, the greater mobility of the population, the spread of literacy, the rise of the press, the springing up and proletarianization of an intelligentsia, and last and most important the appearance of an industrial proletariat, its activities and the growth of its trade union and political organizations, all these have undermined the foundations of old China, have led to the readjustment of the social forces, to the revision of the social relations, to what the Chinese themselves term as the 'revaluation of the old values'.

At the same time, on top of the old traditions grew and strengthened the feeling of national unity, of national integrity and a wrathful protest against the colonial slavery in all its forms and manifestations, a heightened resentfulness towards everything restricting Chinese sovereignty and handicapping the emancipation and unification of China. All this has been briefly formulated in the slogan of the entire nation: 'Down with the Treaties!' This means, down with the 'concessions', down with the control by foreigners of the Chinese customs and railways, down with extra-territoriality, down with the Consular Courts. And finally, it means 'China free, independent, sovereign!'

That this is the common demand of the entire nation, of every section of the Chinese population, is not denied even by the most dyed-in-the-wool imperialists. Thus the Peking correspondent of the arch-imperialist Shanghai *North China Daily News* reports in the middle of July:

'The slogan "Abolish Unequal Treaties" used to be monopolized by the Kuomintang, but nowadays even the most conservative Chinese, who three months ago would have condemned such talk as the talk of wild men, are asserting themselves on the side of the rights recovery movement.'

The strike of the Hong Kong workers in the spring of 1922 and the seamen's strike in the summer of 1924, represent perhaps the finest pages in the recent history of the nationalist movement. And these pages have been written by the young Chinese proletariat.

But splendid and significant as these activities have been in their time, they were only a prelude to the events of the summer, when the role of the working class as the leader of the national emancipation movement, was so strikingly revealed. This is recognized by all, both the petty and the middle bourgeoisie and even, in a certain sense, by the Peking Government itself. Everyone became aware that the workers' strike movement was the backbone of the nationalist movement. This explains the support that the Shanghai and Hong Kong strikes received throughout the country among every section of the population. This explains also the singular fact that the Tuan-Tsi-Jui government contributed 150,000 dollars to the Shanghai strikers and 10,000 dollars—by way of Canton—to the Hong Kong strikers.

This role of the Chinese proletariat, considering its small numbers—there are hardly two million industrial workers in China, a country with 400 million people—and its weak political and trade union organization may seem surprising and strange.

Notes

[1] Chinese workers of Japanese cotton mills in Shanghai and Tsintao went on a general strike; its leader, a Chinese communist, was killed by the Japanese police. Thereupon students held a protest demonstration in the International Settlement in Shanghai. A number of students were arrested, and on 30 May another big demonstration was organized to protest against the trial of the students. The demonstrators went to the police headquarters where the British-controlled police fired on them. This provoked anti-British demonstrations in the major cities of China. In Canton, led by both nationalists and communists, there were demonstrations along the Shameen, the British settlement in the city of Canton, which provoked firing by the British and French troops guarding the

settlement. There was a mass migration of Hong Kong workers to Canton paralysing British business in Hong Kong. The support of the workers and development of the mass movement considerably strengthened the Kuomintang and its government, but also frightened the rightwing nationalists.

[2] A very major landmark in the history of modern China is the May Fourth movement. In 1914 Japan had occupied Kiaochow in Shantung which had previously been leased to Germany, under duress. After the war China expected to regain her rights from Japan, but the expectation was belied by a series of secret treaties in which England, France and Italy pledged their support to Japan. The Chinese government at Peking granted Japan the right to station troops in Shantung in return for a sizable loan; besides, it entered into a military defence agreement with Japan. On the afternoon of 4 May 1919 about 3000 students from 13 schools in Peking held a fiery demonstration against Japan and the government's pro-Japanese policy; they received big public support, especially from the intelligentsia, so much so that three pro-Japanese ministers in the government had to be dismissed. The May Fourth movement not only strengthened the position of Sun Yat Sen and the nationalists, but it also brought into prominence Chen Tu-Hsiu (1879–1942), the founder of the Chinese Communist Party. As Dean of School of Literature at Peking National University and editor of the radical periodical *Ching Nien* (Youth) he was popular with students.

[3] According to a contemporary account, in 1920, about 200,000 factory workers were organized in China, and 185,000 labourers in the mining and rail-road industries; 108,000 workers took part in strikes in 1921 and 139,050 in 1922. Ta Chen, 'The Labour Unrest in China', *Monthly Labour Review*, No. 6, December 1920, p. 23; Ta Chen, 'The Labour Movement in China', *International Labour Review*, No. 3, March 1927.

[4] The Comintern had established contact with Sun Yat Sen as early as the autumn of 1920 when the head of its Eastern Department, Voitinsky, called upon Sun, then living in the French concession of Shanghai. In January 1923 a Declaration was made by Sun Yat Sen and the Soviet representative Joffe, and an alliance was formally established between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China. In the summer of 1923 Sun Yat Sen sent Chiang Kai-Shek, then a young Kuomintang military officer, to the Soviet Union for a few months' study of the Russian Red Army. In the same year Michael Borodin was sent to Canton at Sun's request to be his advisor, and under his influence the first Congress of the Kuomintang was held in January 1924. In the same year (May) the Whampoa Military Academy was founded with Chiang Kai-Shek as Commandant, and Chou En-Lai, a founder of the French branch of the Chinese Communist Party, as head of its political department. SNR

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14. From *The Masses of India* Volume II.
15. *The Future of Indian Politics*.
16. From *The Masses of India* Volume II.
17. From *International Press Correspondence*.

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What is a Communist Party*

Just when a number of communists were on trial in Cawnpur for their alleged activities to organize a working class party, in that very city a 'Communist Party' suddenly came into open existence.[1] The Sessions Court of Cawnpur declared communist propaganda illegal and those engaged in such propaganda 'criminal conspirators'. The High Court upheld this finding of the lower court. Four people were sentenced to four years' hard labour each on the unproved charge that they had been members of an organization engaged in communist propaganda. Previous to the Cawnpur case, a number of others had been arrested and detained in jail on the suspicion of their relations with Bolshevik (communist) propaganda.[2] In view of these facts the appearance of a legal 'Communist Party' is a remarkable phenomenon.

For a year and a half we watched the behaviour of this 'Communist Party'. Now we consider it advisable to abandon the policy of watchful waiting and submit the behaviour and character of this 'Communist Party' to a public examination. We must begin with a short history by citing a few facts in relation to the life of this 'Communist Party'. This we propose to do before passing on to the more serious task of examining its programme.

As pointed out above, the appearance of this party coincided with the outlawing of communist organizations and communist propaganda by the competent juridical authorities. We are far from maintaining that there should be no communist party in India, because British Imperialism is hostile to it. The point we seek to make is that this particular 'Communist Party' of Cawnpur appeared on the scene with an open office, signboard, red flag and all, in spite of the legal ban on communist organizations. The first public statement of the Secretary of the party, Mr Satya Bhakta, contained among others, the following passages: a) 'It is possible that among the workers of Cawnpur there may be some individuals that take kindly towards the Bolshevik or communistic principle. But the government can safely *take it from us* that not a single Bolshevik agent can be found out among them.' (Italics are ours). b) The doings and questionable boldness of M. N. Roy, a Bolshevik agent, are coming to light in these days; and they constitute a clear demonstration of the little value such feats of valour possess for the good of India. The workers of Cawnpur are not such as can be persuaded to adopt such stupid and hopeless procedure. Further, I make bold to say that the Cawnpur labour movement is perfectly free from all Bolshevik influence'. In the first quarterly report of the party a statement about the membership was given.[3] According to this statement, of the 78 members enrolled in three months a good proportion came from the merchants. It was not mentioned if there was one worker among the members. In December 1924, the police raided the office of the 'Communist Party' in connection with the circulation of an illegal leaflet called the *Revolutionary*. The Secretary immediately gave a statement to the press in which he disassociated himself and his party with the leaflet, because the leaflet 'was opposed to some of the principles and the present programme of the party'.[4] The leaflet contained a manifesto of the Revolutionary Party whose programme was outlined therein. The programme called for complete evacuation of India by the British and the establishment of a 'Federal Republic of the United States of India'. It was also declared that 'the Revolutionary Party was not national but international' and 'followed the Indian Rishis of the glorious past and the Bolshevik Rishis of Russia'. In February 1925, the government of the United Provinces was interpellated in the Legislative Council why the Secretary of the 'Communist Party' was not legally proceeded against if the literature found in the office of the party contained seditious matter. The government answered that the case was under consideration. To the second question whether the Communist Party was legal or illegal no answer was given. The Secretary of the 'Communist Party of Cawnpur' was not proceeded against, and his party was permitted a legal existence. The office of the 'Communist Party' of Cawnpur was again visited in July 1925, by the police in search of communist literature. Protesting against that action of the police, the Secretary of the party stated that he had requested the Home Member of the Government of India to let him know the names of proscribed foreign books and papers so that such literature might not be kept in his bookshop. He also declared that not a single book taken away by the police 'contained *anything against the government or the Emperor of India*',[5] (Italics are ours). In a recent statement in connection with the projected national conference of his party, Mr Satya Bhakta outlines the position of his party. According to the statement, his 'Communist Party' is against any international affiliation. He warns 'the friends and supporters of his party against advocating the policy of establishing relations with the Communist Party of Russia'. He holds that 'the cause they espouse will not benefit by such methods'. 'Sacrifice and suffering' should, according to Mr Satya Bhakta, be the watchword of the Indian working class.[6]

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II No. 1, January 1926, unsigned article. SNR.

These facts speak for themselves. But it is necessary to dwell on them a little more, lest the reader fails to draw the correct conclusions therefrom. While relentlessly hunting down those suspected of communist propaganda, the British government tolerates Mr Satya Bhakta's 'Communist Party'. It should be remembered that during the Cawnpur Case the prosecution counsel declared that the government did not desire to prosecute communism as such, but would not tolerate any communist agitation having for its object the organization of the working class into a party which would overthrow His Majesty's Government. In view of this official attitude, it can be gathered that Mr Satya Bhakta's 'Communist Party' is of the safe and sane kind which can not only be ignored by the government, but can even merit official patronage. One can put another interpretation on the above attitude of the government. It is that the government is not hostile to the propagation of communist theories, but would not tolerate the application of these theories to practice. It can be argued that Mr Satya Bhakta's 'Communist Party' is not persecuted by the government because it is engaged in pure theoretical work, postponing the practical political activities till more suitable occasion comes. While analyzing the programme of his party, it will, however, be shown that it is not the case. Mr Satya Bhakta does not know anything of communist theory.

It is remarkable how Mr Satya Bhakta vies with the British government to guard the Indian labour movement against any possible influence of 'Bolshevik agents'. Is not this anxiety on his part sufficient reason for the government to give him freedom of action? It is certainly advantageous for the British police to have a 'Communist Party' hunting the heresy of Bolshevism. So much more useful does this party become when it operates in an industrial centre like Cawnpur where, according to Mr Satya Bhakta, there are workers who 'take kindly to Bolshevik or communist principles'. What a crime for the proletariat to take kindly to communist principles! A 'Communist Party' that considers the workers' liking for communist principles a danger signal is a very curious phenomenon indeed. Then, Mr Satya Bhakta's gratuitous attack on poor M. N. Roy is also significant. Taking his cue from the British police Mr Satya Bhakta calls Roy a 'Bolshevik agent' as distinct from a *bonafide* communist. Roy or anybody else certainly lays himself open to criticism by honest leaders of the Indian working class, if he commits mistakes. But Mr Satya Bhakta does not criticize the point of view of Roy on its merit. In fact he is incapable to do that. All that he could do was to echo the voice of the police. That was significant.

Another act of Mr Satya Bhakta requiring attention was his disavowal of the programme contained in the manifesto of the Revolutionary Party. Apart from its naiveté and quaintness (about the Rishis), the programme raised issues of vital importance, namely, complete national independence, organization of a democratic state and the allies of the Indian people in their struggle for freedom. According to his own statement, the principles of Mr Satya Bhakta and his 'Communist Party' are against these vital issues. That is, the knight-errant of the Indian working class is against national independence, is opposed to a democratic government and does not believe that the world proletariat led by the Russian working class are the historic ally of the subject peoples in their struggle for national freedom.

The refusal of the government to proceed against the Cawnpur 'Communist Party' can be very well understood in the light of what Mr Satya Bhakta said after the police raided his office in July 1925. He admitted that he had informed the government of his willingness to deal only in books approved by the police. He also pointed out that his store of 'communist' education was not in the least contaminated by any book against the government or the Emperor of India. It must have been owing to the stupidity of an over-enthusiastic head-constable (eager for promotion) that Mr Satya Bhakta's office and bookshop were visited by police. We are informed that the mistake of the local police was rectified. All the books taken away were returned to Mr Satya Bhakta.

Outlining the agenda of the conference of his party Mr Satya Bhakta once more registered his opinion against international affiliation. He said that any connection with the proletarian organization of other countries would be harmful to the Indian labour movement. This wisdom was ventilated just at the moment when the locked-out workers of Bombay were morally and materially helped by the proletarian organizations of Europe including the Russian Textile Workers' Union which sent a message of solidarity accompanied by 1,000 pounds as soon as the lock-out was declared. In contradistinction to this action on the part of the proletarian organizations of Europe, the inactivity of the 'Communist Party' of Mr Satya Bhakta during the two and half months' struggle of the Bombay workers is remarkable. In his 'programme', to which we will come presently, Mr Satya Bhakta criticizes the present leaders of the Indian labour movement. He declares his 'Communist Party' to be the only true friend of the Indian working class. But where was his party when 150,000 workers were engaged in the fiercest struggle in the history of the Indian labour movement? It must have been smelling Bolshevik agents elsewhere.

The 'programme' of the 'Communist Party' of Cawnpur is indicative of the mentality of its author and the character of the party. It is not a programme, much less a Communist Programme. Judged by the document, its author is not only totally ignorant of the theories of Communism, but politically illiterate. The introductory part of the so-called programme concludes with the following:

'The Communist Party of India is absolutely independent. Our relations with the Communist International are the relations of friendship and mutual sympathy between peoples having the same principles. . . In short, we want to change the social system and the government of India, according to communist principles, but keeping in mind the conditions and mentality of the Indian people'.[7]

Now, in this wilderness at least one thing is clear. The 'Communist Party' of Mr Satya Bhakta professes to have the same principles as of the Communist International and proposes to change the social system and government of India according to those principles. For the sake of clarity be it noted that there is no difference between the principles of the Communist International and communist principles. The Communist International is based upon the principles of communism. This being the case, let us examine if the professions of Mr Satya Bhakta and his party correspond with their programme. The principle of communism (that is, of the Communist International) that is of supreme importance as far as India is concerned is that the freedom of the peoples subjugated by the imperialist powers is a necessary condition for the construction of Socialist Society. Consequently, the programme of the Communist Parties (there are 54 of them, all members of the Communist International) includes national freedom for the colonial and subject peoples. The parties in the imperialist and independent countries must actively aid the subject peoples in their struggle for freedom. The Communist Parties in the subject countries should not only participate in the movement for national freedom, but be the vanguard of that movement. Does the 'Communist Party' of Cawnpur comply with this principle? It does not. In its programme there is not a word on this most vital question. On the contrary, not only by omission, but even by commission it holds that national independence is not a prerequisite for the 'change of the social system and government of India according to communist principles'. It repudiated the programme of the nationalist revolutionary, stated in the illegal leaflet, the *Revolutionary*, as opposed to its principles. The secretary of the party took the credit of not having in the party bookshop one single book that was against the British government or the Emperor of India. Obviously, Mr Satya Bhakta's 'Communist principles' can accommodate foreign kings and emperors in addition to native capitalists and landlords. Towards the end of the programme we find this passage: 'Swaraj realized by the other parties will not bring much benefit to the poor; the only difference will be the replacement of English officials by Indians, and it is not certain that that will be a better change. The Communist Party is determined to establish real Swaraj'. If the first sentence means anything, it is an appeal to the working class not to support the nationalist parties, because a nationalist government will not change the condition of the masses; and it is even hinted that a nationalist government may not be better than the British Government! Then, the 'Communist Party' promises to establish the 'real Swaraj'. The nature of this kingdom of heaven, however, is conveniently left undefined. Mr Satya Bhakta's 'Communist Party' is better outside the Communist International. Because even if it were otherwise honest and reliable, it would not be admitted in the Communist International owing to its counter-revolutionary attitude on the question of national freedom.

The realization of the programme of transforming the social system of India according to communist principles is dependent upon a series of changes in the present politico-economic conditions of our country. To transform the social system according to communist principles means to replace the present order by Socialist Society. Now, Socialist Society cannot be artificially created. It comes into being in course of the continual evolution in the forces of production. It is notorious that imperialist domination has during centuries obstructed the normal development of the forces of production in India. That is, uptil now India lacks those forces that make for the establishment of Socialism. Consequently, under the present circumstances, communists (that is, those endeavouring to realize Socialism) should support, expedite, lead (if necessary) every movement making for the creation of conditions which will help the development of the forces of production. Interests of Imperialism demand that the productive forces of India should remain in a backward state. With her economic growth artificially held back, India largely remains in social conditions which are far far away from socialism. The present world-wide crisis of capitalism is forcing a change in the imperialist policy. This change will to some extent liberate the forces of production in India. But it will be done not in the interests of the native society, but for the stabilization of imperialism. Such stabilization, in its turn, will strengthen Britain's political hold upon India. Therefore, communists can never evade the question of political power. In a subject country they must fight for national independence. In the struggle between Imperialism and the native bourgeoisie, the working class must support the latter; because the victory of the nationalist bourgeoisie will create political and economic conditions under which the struggle for socialism will become more intense, and the working class will be nearer to the realization of their historic mission.

In view of the possible compromise between the nationalist bourgeoisie and Imperialism, the role of the Indian working class in the struggle for national freedom becomes much more important. Due to deep-rooted historical reasons, the Indian working class is destined to lead the struggle for national liberation. In this historical mission the Indian working class must be led by its own political party—the Communist Party. Its attitude on the all-important question of national freedom proves that the 'Communist Party' of Cawnpur is not a communist party.

The compromise between the Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism will be at the expense of the Indian working class. The recent Bombay lock-out is an example. In order that the age-long struggle between the millowners of Bombay and Lancashire were terminated, 150,000 Indian workers were thrown out of employment for ten weeks. The basis of Imperialism is the exploitation of cheap colonial labour. The upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie (big capitalists) can be won over by a share in this exploitation. But this compromise will not remove the grievances of the middle classes and the peasantry constituting an overwhelming majority of the population. But these classes, in spite of their numerical greatness, are incapable of taking independent, bold, political action. They are easily swayed by illusions, in case of the middle classes, and petty superficial reforms, in case of the peasantry. Given a courageous political leadership, these oppressed masses are sure to continue the struggle for national liberation. The role of this leadership belongs to the proletariat. Proletarian leadership, however, will not change the object of the nationalist movement, which is the liberation of the Indian people from foreign domination, even in a veiled form, and the establishment of a democratic national government. In leading the struggle—in exercising hegemony in the struggle—the proletariat must not forget the social composition of the forces they are leading, and that the political economic programme of the movement should be in harmony with that social composition. Therefore that 'real Swaraj' for India in the immediate future can be nothing more than a democratic republican state. Bourgeois revolution must precede the proletarian revolution. The success of the former creates conditions for the latter. India has not yet had her bourgeois revolution except by proxy. British conquest undermined feudal economy and introduced modern capitalist exploitation. But feudal patriarchal traditions still hang heavily on the Indian society. The work for socialist reconstruction cannot be begun before those debris of the past are swept away. A democratic republican state will do this preparatory work.

The task of the Communist Party is to lead the proletariat against the united nationalist and imperialist bourgeoisie. Under the leadership of the Communist Party the proletariat must rally around themselves all the available forces of national revolution. On the other hand, close relations should be established with the British proletariat. The compromise between the Indian and British capitalists is equally harmful to the British proletariat. The concrete outcome of this compromise will be the industrialization of India with joint British and Indian capital. In consequence of this, British bourgeoisie will avail themselves more directly of the benefits of exploiting cheap Indian labour. They will thus be in a position to force down the standard of living of the home proletariat to the Indian levels. To escape this threatened degradation, British working class must aid any movement that will render cheap Indian labour unavailable to British capital. This unity of class interest is the basis of the international proletarian organization. In order to play the role of leading the anti-imperialist struggle, Indian proletariat must belong to the international proletarian organization. A communist party that does not belong to the Communist International is not the vanguard of the Indian working class.[8] Since, under the guidance of the Communist International, Indian working class will successfully carry on the struggle against Imperialism, Indian communists who fully appreciate the significance of the struggle for national freedom and endeavour to organize the working class as the vanguard of this struggle, are hunted as 'Bolshevik agents', 'criminal conspirators'and what not, because, unlike Mr Satya Bhakta, they do not have their communist curriculum sanctioned by the British Home Member, nor do they refrain from circulating literature preaching revolt against the British government and the Emperor of India. The fact that Mr Satya Bhakta is not only opposed to the affiliation of the Indian labour movement to the Communist International, but vies with the British police in denouncing 'Bolshevik agents' speaks for itself.

The next point in the programme in consideration relates to a question which is also of vital importance to India. It deals with the agrarian question. Over 70 per cent of our population being agrarian (most of them belonging to the category of poor peasantry), the question of landownership should occupy a very prominent place in the programme of a party that proposes to 'change the social system according to communist principles'. What has Mr Satya Bhakta got to say on this question? The following occurs in his programme:

'It can be admitted that the peasants should pay tax to the government; but it is not necessary to have intermediaries. Until the victory of the proletariat it will be impossible to abolish the landlords; meanwhile, even at this moment, the government and the leaders of the country could, if they desired the welfare of the peasants, ease the situation considerably. We demand that the peasant shall have direct relations with the government who shall pay the landlord his share in the land revenue. . . Thus the landlords will lose nothing of their income. . . '

So, the party out to transform the Indian society according to communist principles has nothing against the forms of landownership obtaining in India. All it demands is that the position of the two exploiters, namely, native landlord and foreign government, should be reversed. The unearned income from land which goes to fatten a parasitic class (the bulwark of social reaction) should not be touched; on the contrary, it should be guaranteed by the government. Before accepting the leadership of the 'Communist Party' of Mr Satya Bhakta, the peasantry could well want to know how their economic situation would be improved should the 'government and the leaders of the people, desiring the welfare of the peasants', comply with the 'communist' demand. We wonder if Mr Satya Bhakta is aware of the fact that the majority of the peasantry in his own province are tenants at will. Insecurity of tenure is the crux of the agrarian question in Oudh as well as many other provinces. It was the British government which placed the Oudh peasantry in this insecure position to placate the Talukdars after the Mutiny. In gratitude for this benevolence of Canning, the Oudh Talukdars have all along remained staunch supporters of the British rule. It is naive, if nothing worse, to expect that the British government would interfere with the absolutism of its protege and tried ally at the request of a picturesque 'Communist Party'. The trouble with the 'Communist Party' of Mr Satya Bhakta is its faith in the eternalness and benevolence of British Imperialism. A plan to transform the Indian society according to the principles of communism within the framework of British domination and with the sanction of the police is bound to be funny.

Obviously, to justify his belief in the eternalness of land-rent and inviolability of the landlord's share in the land revenue, Mr Satya Bhakta points out the impossibility of the overthrow of landlordism before the victory of the proletariat. But this wisdom cannot fool anyone possessing the slightest knowledge of the evolution of the forces of social economics. Abolition of landlordism is a condition for the victory of the proletariat. Even the very growth of the modern proletariat is dependent upon the social conditions that follow the disruption of landlordism. The forces for the disruption of feudal landlordism are mature in India. They are to be found in the seething agrarian discontent on the one hand, and industrial capitalism on the other. These forces go into the making of the nationalist movement. The victory of the nationalist movement, therefore, will cause the disruption of the forms of feudal landownership which have so far been preserved under the protection of British Imperialism for its own benefit. The programme of a true communist party should be the abolition of landlordism to be realized not in consequence of the far-off victory of the proletariat, but in the nearest future, through the operation of the above-mentioned social forces. The proletariat can be the leader of the peasant masses only by being the vanguard of the struggle against feudal absolutism and imperialist exploitation. To advise the peasantry to make the best of the present state of affairs until the victory of the proletariat is counter-revolutionary.

The communist party is the party of the proletariat. It is primarily based upon proletarian organization and its main task is to create, strengthen and capture the leadership of such organization. In the programme under examination a short paragraph is devoted to this very vital question. The entire paragraph again, except one sentence, contains criticism of the present trade union leaders. In the exceptional sentence the 'Communist Party' promises to 'organize the workers on new methods'. These new methods, however, are not explained. Evidently, approaching the question of proletarian organization, the 'party of the Indian proletariat' found itself in *terra incognita*. What else can be expected of a 'Communist Party' composed of merchants with a fair sprinkling of 'ladies and gentlemen' and perhaps a few landlords lurking in the background?

Mr Satya Bhakta summarizes his 'communist' programme thus: 'When the exploited 90 per cent will be organized, the exploiting 10 per cent will have no other way than to submit to the majority. The organized action of the peasants, labourers and other workers is a force that can destroy all the diseases of the society without violence or injustice on our part'.

In these two sentences of 'communist' programme, communist principles are twice violated. The first sentence smacks of the worst form of syndicalism and the second contains counter-revolutionary Social Democratic cant. It will be ages before 90 per cent of the Indian population are organized, if it ever can be done under capitalist system. Then, simple organization will not deprive the exploiting 10 per cent of the political power-control of the state apparatus, army, navy, police and all the other forces of coercion. With all these formidable means at their disposal the exploiting class will not submit before the majority unless the latter are armed with something more than trade union membership cards. The society will not be freed from the domination of the exploiting minority so long as the latter remain in possession of the state-power. How can the organized majority deprive the minority of this formidable weapon without violence and injustice? You cannot disarm a robber unless you knock him down first. Knocking down a robber cannot be done without violence. Nor can you realize the 'emancipation of the working class' unless you deprive the possessing classes of their power, rights and privileges. To deprive someone of his possession is to do him injustice from his point of view. So, the social system cannot be changed without 'violence and injustice'. A communist is not necessarily bloodthirsty, but he is a realist. Justice is relative term. What is just for one may not be just for another. How can private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange be abolished without doing injustice to the possessing class? And without the abolition of private property there can be no Socialism.

Mr Satya Bhakta is afraid that if the proletariat grow powerful, the government will be 'unjust' to his party and suppress it. He, therefore, considers it his duty to prevent the proletariat from growing strong. In doing this, he is perfectly just to the government which, in gratitude, will not suppress his 'Communist Party', although the very name of Communism or Bolshevism is to Britsh Imperialism as a red rag to a bull. The British government is mortally afraid of communist propaganda and communist party, because it knows better than Mr Satya Bhakta what is Communism and what is a Communist Party. A 'Communist Party' that does not fight for national independence of a subject people, does not lead an agrarian revolution against feudal landlordism, is opposed to international affiliation, preaches that the proletariat should not act till they are hundred per cent organized, does not have any idea about militant labour organisation, does not believe in revolution, is hostile to armed insurrection and eager to do justice to the possessing classes, such a 'Communist Party' can receive justice from the British government, but will never be the party of the Indian working class—the vanguard in the struggle for freedom.[9]

NOTE: In the absence of the original English text, a French translation of the 'Programme of the C.P. of Cawnpur' is used for the quotations made in this article.

Notes

[1] By 1922 Roy's persistent efforts from abroad had resulted in the formation of five small Communist groups in India,— at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Kanpur and Lahore. Before the groups could be organized into a Communist party, three of Roy's principal contacts in India, Shaukat Usmani, Muzaffar Ahmad and Ghulam Hussain, were arrested in May 1923; this was followed by the arrest of Roy's emissary, Nalini Gupta, in December. The Communist Conspiracy Case was launched at Kanpur (Cawnpur) on 27 February 1924, and the trial began in April 1924. In July 1924, one Satyabhakta advertised in a Hindi daily his intention to establish the Indian Communist Party (Bharatiya Samyawadi Dal) and in September he announced its establishment and published leaflets in Hindi and English which included membership forms. These leaflets and other relevant documents were later included in the Meerut Conspiracy Case records, but the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, Cecil Kaye, had already reported in September 1924 that 'Satyabhakta and his

associates are men of no weight whatever' and his Communist party 'will be nothing but a name' (Cecil Kaye, *Communism in India,* 1971 edition with 'unpublished Documents' compiled and edited by Subodh Roy, p. 262).

[2] The reference is to the Peshawar Conspiracy Cases (May 1922 to April 1924) in which nearly all the accused were muhajirs who had received training in Moscow and had been sent to India by Roy. In his Judgement the Session Judge J. H. R. Fraser stated that the accused 'are. . . being convicted because they are emissaries of the Communism adopted by the bolsheviks and Roy.'

[3] The quotation above in *The Masses* article is from a letter of Satyabhakta's published in *Dainik Vartaman* of 31 April 1924 in which he defended a strike of workers against the charge that the strike was inspired by bolsheviks. Having announced his legal Indian Communist Party in September 1924 Satyabhakta published *Pranvir* in December 1924. According to intelligence reports, of the 78 members 34 were from Kanpur, 16 were editors and 4 press-owners.

[4] The leaflet, 'Revolutionary', was published by the Hindusthan Republican Association, a revolutionary nationalist organization based mainly in the then United Provinces and led by Sachindra Nath Sanyal and Joges Chandra Chatterji. Both Sanyal and Chatterji were convicted in the Kakori Conspiracy Case; the former was sentenced to transportation for life, the latter to ten years' rigorous imprisonment. Satyabhakta's statement dissociating himself from the 'Revolutionary' was published in his journal *Pranvir* on 8 February 1925. For details, see David Petrie, *Communism in India 1924–1927*, (1972 reprint).

[5] *Hindustan Times*, 16 July 1925. Satyabhakta was already in correspondence with Sylvia Pankhurst, editor of *Workers' Dreadnought*, and S. D. Saklatvala, Communist Member of Parliament, and was receiving literature from the Communist Party of Great Britain. It is not inconceivable that some CPGB leaders were interested in projecting Satyabhakta to undermine Roy's authority and influence. Jurisdictional conflicts between Roy and some CPGB leaders were sought to be resolved at a secret Conference at Amsterdam in July 1925. *Communist Papers,* HMSO, London, 1926, Cmd 2682.

[6] Satyabhakta's leaflet titled 'The Future Programme of the Indian Communist Party', dated 18 June 1925, mentioned his expectation that 'an Indian Communist Conference will be held' in December to coincide with the Indian National Congress session at Kanpur. A second leaflet titled 'The First Indian Communist Conference' and dated 12 October 1925, made the formal announcement. Both documents were included in Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case Records. Roy's article was written before the Conference. After receiving telegraphic news concerning the Conference he wrote a short editorial note in the same issue of *The Masses* (January 1926). A more detailed critique was published in the March issue.

[7] As indicated in *The Masses'* editorial note at the end of this article, Roy depended on a French translation of Satyabhakta's leaflet for his quotations. In the original text as included in the Meerut Case papers, the relevant passage was as follows: 'The Indian Communist Party is absolutely an independent body. Our relation with the Comintern is of the nature of friendship and mutual sympathy as followers of the same principle . . . . No doubt we want to change the present System of Indian Society and government according to communistic principles but only with due regard to the conditions and mentality of the Indian people' (Meerut Records p. 1796 (b)).

[8] Satyabhakta was not the only one who had reservations about having close ties with the Comintern. Among Roy's principal contacts in India both S. A. Dange and Singaravelu Chettiar declined Roy's invitation to them to come and confer with him in Europe about the methods and means for organizing a party in India. Home Deptt., Pol. F. 103/IV of May 1923 and F.261 KW1 of 1924.

[9] According to the *Who's Who* provided by David Petrie, the then Director of the Intelligence Bureau, in his *Communism in India 1924–1927*, 1972 reprint (p. 338),

Satyabhakta's real name was Chakan Lal; he came from Bharatpur, age about 32 (1927), was editor of the *Pranvir*, Nagpur, but since 1923 settled at Kanpur where he ran a Communist bookshop. The Conference called by Satyabhakta did take place in Kanpur from 25 to 28 December 1925 with Hazrat Mohani as Chairman of the Reception Committee and Singaravelu as President of the Conference. Muzaffar Ahmad (who had been released in September 1925) and several other Communists took part in the Conference, captured it, formed the Communist Party of India, adopted its Constitution and elected its office-bearers. Satyabhakta left the Conference, started his own National Community Party, published a Hindi fortnightly *Samyavadi*, and in May 1926 issued a two-page leaflet titled 'The Indian Communists and M. N. Roy' heaping much personal abuse on Roy and announcing his National Communist Party. According to Petrie (p. 168), by 1927, Satyabhakta's party 'was, to all intents and purposes, defunct', even though his work was appreciated by the visiting Communist M. P., Shapurji Saklatvala. SNR.

The Indian Communists and the Communist International*

We have now in hand the report of the proceedings of the 'Communist' conference held at Cawnpur simultaneously with the National Congress.[1] After carefully studying the report, we do not find it necessary to make any amendment to the views expressed in the article published in our January number. The speeches of the president, Singaravelu Chettiar, and of the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Hazrat Mohani, contain notions of Communism which are extremely confused—childish. The Conference, in reality, was a gathering of heterogeneous elements dissatisfied with the programme and leadership of the nationalist movement. But judging from the reports, no definite political lead was given to those revolutionary elements one way or the other. The general trend of the Conference was nationalist, affected by some queer notions of communism. In consequence, neither a revolutionary nationalist party nor a party of the proletariat could possibly be born in the Conference.

Both Singaravelu Chettiar and Hazrat Mohani were very anxious to make it clear that 'Indian Communists were not Bolsheviks'.[2] The former stated 'We are one with world Communism, but not with Bolshevism', and expressed his hope that 'this expression of our position in India will clear all misapprehensions about our Party and aims and methods'. The president began his speech with the significant wish 'that our peaceful movement will be better understood both by our countrymen and our rulers by means of the deliberations we will have in this Conference'. He declared that the Communists were persecuted in India and other countries because 'our movement is misunderstood and misinterpreted by the ruling classes'. To this persecution, opined the anti-Bolshevik Communist Singaravelu, 'we have only one answer—the answer given at Calvary—oh, you know not what you do!'

Hazrat Mohani expounded Islamic Communism as if to vie with the Biblical variety of the Gandhite Singaravelu.[3] His opposition to Bolshevism, however, was motivated in a slightly different way. Essentially a nationalist revolutionary, Hazrat Mohani declared 'our organization is purely Indian'. He emphasized that the activities of the 'Communist Party' would be restricted to India; that its 'relations with similar parties in other countries will be only that of sympathy and mental affinity'. He specified that this attitude was particularly applicable to the Third International, referring to which Hazrat Mohani said: 'We are only fellow travellers in our path and not their subordinates. Neither we give them any particular help nor do they extend any financial aid to us' . . .

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II No. 3 March 1926, unsigned editorial. The text has been slightly shortened. Left out passages are indicated by three consecutive dots . . . SNR.

Apparently, Hazrat Mohani's attitude is determined by two factors, namely: 1) the anxiety to avoid prosecution on the plea of having relations with Bolshevik agents' and 2) a wrong understanding of or false information about the Communist International. If a Communist Party in India acts as a real Communist Party should act in the given situation, it will be favoured with all the attention of the C.I.D. irrespective of any relation with the Communist International. Indian Communists (not of the Satya Bhakta type) are hunted down as 'Bolshevik agents' not because of their relation with the Communist International, but because of their intrinsic dangerousness for British rule in India. They propose to organize and lead the Indian working class to Socialism not by an utopian short-cut, but through successive stages of revolutionary fight, the fight for democratic national freedom from the imperialist yoke being the immediate stage. We can remind Hazrat Mohani that the charge against the accused in the Cawnpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case was not that they were simply Communists, but that they, as Communists, endeavoured to organize a Workers' and Peasants' Party with the object of overthrowing His Britannic Majesty's Government in India. After a year and a half one of the accused (against whom the charges were withdrawn for some mysterious reason) is permitted, as president of a 'Communist Conference', to expound Communism as distinct from Bolshevism. Evidently, this particular person has in the meantime successfully convinced the police that his Communism is the permissible safe and sane 'Communism as such'—it is not meant to be applied for the organization of the working class in a revolutionary fight against imperialist domination. Indian Communists would be judged by the British police on their revolutionary merits. Relation with the Communist International is an incidental issue. A Communist Party in India or any other country is not imported from Moscow. It grows out of the local social conditions, and by its very nature establishes international relations.

Hazrat Mohani seems to think that the Communist International is something like the Christian Church, or (may we say without hurting the Maulana's religious convictions?) the Islamic Khilafat. He thinks that the relation between the Communist International and its national sections is that of the autocrat and the subordinate. This notion of his is obviously formed on the basis of the malignantly false information derived from the imperialist press and news agencies. Nevertheless, we are inclined to believe that the Maulana could easily acquaint himself with the statutes of the Communist International if he desired to. The programme, policy, and tactics of the Communist International are laid down in the World Congresses that are held from time to time. Delegations from all the national sections attend these Congresses. An Executive Committee elected by one Congress acts as the supreme body of the International till the next Congress. The Executive Committee leads the International according to the decisions of the Congress . . .

Hazrat Mohani put the question as if any relation of the Indian Communists with the International would be of homage paid in consideration of financial aid. Nothing could be more mistaken. Communists, in their effort to lead the Indian working class in the struggle against British Imperialism and native landlordism and capitalism, require the fullest support of the International proletariat. In spite of their internal contradictions, capitalism and imperialism are international forces. The forces fighting against them, therefore, must also be organized internationally. The Chinese revolutionary movement is an example. The Chinese people headed by the working class successfully challenge the united forces of foreign imperialism (British, Japanese, American, French, etc.) and native militarism, because they are fully supported, in every sense, by the international proletariat led by the Union of Soviet Republics. The collective forces and resources of the Communist International representing the revolutionary proletariat vanguard of 54 countries (including the Soviet Union) stand firmly by its Chinese Section—the Communist Party of China.

In 1919–20 we had in India a popular upheaval of gigantic revolutionary potentiality. Had it been possible to secure the practical support of the international proletariat, the history of India would be somewhat differently written—India would have preceded China in challenging the position of Imperialism in the East. We know what was the weakness of the Indian nationalist movement in the post-war years. We know how Gandhist prejudices of non-violence doomed the Non-Cooperation movement to death before it had been born. We know that India's fight for freedom was shamefully sabotaged by the weak, vacillating, anti-revolutionary bourgeois nationalists. The task of the Indian Communist at present is to organize the working class as the vanguard of the struggle against Imperialism. Given the intellectual backwardness and political immaturity of the Indian working class, the Communists will be able to accomplish their historical task in India only if supported by the entire resources of the international proletarian vanguard—the Communist International and the Union of Soviet Republics. The British police appreciate the danger of this international affiliation better than the 'communists' of Cawnpur. Therefore, they terrify even revolutionaries like Hazrat Mohani out of reason by the malignant lies about 'Bolshevik agent' and 'Bolshevik gold' . . .

In the case of Singaravelu, the hostility to the Communist International is apparently of a different nature. He tried to make out that there was a difference in principle between 'Indian Communism' and the Communism of the Communist International. Otherwise there would be absolutely no sense in his oft-repeated statement: 'Indian Communism is not Bolshevism' . . . He figures a Bolshevik as a ruffian with a bloody knife in his teeth, greedily devouring a bowl of soup with a few baby fingers floating in it. As against this gruesome figure and the barbarous doctrine that he preaches, Singaravelu holds before the Indian proletariat the vision of Jesus on Calvary as the ideal communist! The oppressed masses of India did not need a 'Communist Conference' for this message of hope. During several centuries, the missionaries of Christ have been zealously preaching to them 'Biblical Communism' to aid the brutal exploitation by Christian imperialism. . .

Bolshevism holds that bourgeois democracy is the dictatorship of the capitalist class; that all the resources of the existing bourgeois state (army, navy, police, system of education, etc.) are meant to perpetuate this dictatorship; that real advance towards Socialism cannot be made unless the political power of the bourgeoisie is broken; that the bourgeoisie cannot be deprived of their political power except by an armed revolution; that all the activities of the proletarian party should be bent towards one end—to organize the working class for the insurrection; that a determined minority, assured of the sympathy and support of the masses, will act as the revolutionary vanguard, leading the entire working class (together with its allies, the peasantry and other oppressed classes) to Socialism; that, even after the seizure of political power by the proletariat, the class struggle will continue first in the form of civil war, then in exterminating the remnants of capitalism in the conditions of production; and that the proletariat will establish dictatorship in the transition period between the overthrow of capitalism and the realization of Socialism.

These principles of Bolshevism are not a 'peculiar Russian product'. They were laid down by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto. So, the fundamental principles of Bolshevism are identical with the cardinal principles of Communism, that is, Marxian Socialism.

As against these, the Mensheviks, that is, the Social Democrats, maintain that armed revolution is not necessary for the realization of Socialism; that parliamentary system of government gives the proletariat the opportunity to seize the political power by returning a majority at the polls; that the democratic system will gradually and painlessly lead to Socialism; and that the transition from capitalism to socialism should not be dictatorship of the proletariat as against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, but governmental coalition between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. These doctrines resulted from a revision of Marxism caused by the growth of a labour aristocracy in the period of prosperity which was brought about by colonial expansion. They became most pronounced in Britain and Germany. And since the British Labour Party and the German Social Democratic Party dominated the Second International, Menshevism became an international factor until in 1914 it betrayed the proletariat. During the war, Menshevik leaders forgot their internationalism and helped the bourgeoisie of their respective countries to have the proletarian masses massacred on the altar of imperialist greed. In the post-war years all the Menshevist doctrines of pacifism, democracy and coalition became threadbare. Pacifism became counter-revolutionary cant; democracy was replaced by bare-faced fascist dictatorship; and coalition governments only served to help the bourgeoisie tide over difficult positions.

These are in brief, the differences between Bolshevism and Menshevism. None of them is the special product of any particular land. Both of them are international factors in the proletarian movement. Any proletarian party that rejects Bolshevism, unavoidably lands in the Menshevik camp. As a matter of fact, granted its sincerity, the programme expounded by Singaravelu is Menshevism of a very naive and confused kind. His anxiety to disown any connection with the Communist International, however, was caused by other reasons than a difference of principle. His understanding of Communist principles and programmes is not profound enough to give rise to a *bona fide* divergence of views. What he was anxious about was to 'clear all misapprehension about our party, aim and methods'. The fundamental principle of the 'Communist Party' of Cawnpur is neither Bolshevism nor even Menshevism. It is to secure the approval of the police for its existence. A 'Communist Party' which is a 'peaceful movement', is solicitous that the ruling class do not misapprehend its aim and methods, holds up the gospels of Christ, Buddha and Mohammed as the principles of pure communism, hates and fears Bolshevism, considers it its duty to keep the proletariat away from the Communist International, brushes aside the question of democratic national freedom in favour of a nebulous Utopia of 'Labour Swaraj', is eager to have its propaganda literature approved by the British police, is against revolution and does not generally understand anything about Communism—such a 'Communist Party' can count not only upon the approval of Imperialism. It can even be favoured with official patronage. . .[4]

Notes

[1] Reports of the Communist Conference and summaries of the speeches of Hazrat Mohani and Singaravelu Chettiar were published in the *Hindustan Times, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Forward, Vishwamitra, Langal, Kirti,* and other periodicals. Mitra's *The Indian Annual Register* 1925, Vol. II also gave a report and summary. Two unsigned articles on the Conference appeared in *Near East and India* Vol. XXIX No. 765, 14 January 1926 and Vol. XXIX No. 768, 4 February 1926. Janaki Prasad Bagerhatta, one of the two elected General Secretaries of the newly formed Communist Party of India, sent Roy reports and documents of the Conference.

[2] Mylapore Singaravelu Chettiar (1860–1946), fisherman by birth, Vakil of Madras High Court by profession, active in Congress and Labour movements, corresponded with M. N. Roy, attended the Gaya Session of the Congress (1922), founded the Labour Kisan Party (1923), was arrested in March 1924 and accused in the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case, but the case was withdrawn against him and the warrant cancelled; subsequently active in the Self-Respect Movement, trade union work, and propagation of materialist and socialist views.

[3] Hazrat Mohani (1878–1951), pen name of Saiyed Fazlul Hasan, poet-journalist-militant nationalist, took part in Khilafat and Satyagraha movements, moved unsuccessfully the complete independence resolution at the Ahmedabad session of the Congress in 1921, sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment, later moved away from the Congress, opposed Partition and India's membership of the Commonwealth.

[4] From the texts of Mohani's and Singaravelu's speeches and the report sent by J. P. Bagerhatta, Roy inferred that the organizers of the Conference were not genuine Communists. He, however, did not suspect then and would not know for quite sometime thereafter, that his correspondent, J. P. Bagerhatta, who had been made a General Secretary of the newly formed Communist Party of India by the Communists who had 'captured' the Conference, was in fact an agent planted by the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, David Petrie. Bagerhatta would be expelled on suspicion by the Party in 1927. His role was exposed during the Meerut Conspiracy Case. SNR.

'Langal'*

It is with great delight that we welcome the new Bengalee Weekly 'Langal'. India cries out for such journals. Indian revolutionaries must get tired of the 'political fireworks' of bourgeois nationalism and find their own ways. All around there are signs of political and ideological crystallization of revolutionary tendencies. The appearance of the 'Langal' is one of those signs. It represents the tendency of 'to the masses'. The de-classed intellectuals are beginning to recognize the importance of establishing relations with the masses. A consciously revolutionary factor is naturally drawn towards the potential forces of revolution. It is a good augury.

The first several issues of the 'Langal' that have reached us show that the journal has made a hopeful beginning.[1] As its name signifies, it proposes primarily to be an organ of the peasant movement. Its aim is to defend the interests of the peasantry. In the contemporary epoch nothing is more important than to give an adequate and faithful political expression to the grievances and demands of the peasantry. They constitute over 70 per cent of our population; and they are engaged in the principal industry of the land. To talk of the peasantry—of 'village reconstruction'—has of late been a fashion in India. The fashion obtains in a variety of circles as removed from each other as the poles. Our imperialist rulers have taken up the slogan of 'agricultural reforms'. Attempts are made from all sides to organize an officially inspired land reform party. Non-political humanitarian bodies with the programme of teaching the peasantry the virtue of poverty are springing up like mushrooms; the nationalists also declare their intention to 'reconstruct the village' by digging wells and distributing homoeopathic medicines. None of these go anywhere near the root of the agrarian problem. Some of them purposely seek to obscure it. But the general attention to it proves that the probelm can no longer be ignored. In spite of the enormous odds against them, the peasants are in revolt. The acute outburst of 1919–21 temporarily subsided. Lately, signs of a revival are to be noticed on all sides. Neither imperialist repression nor bourgeois nationalist (including Gandhist) treachery could successfully stem the rising tide of peasant revolt which is one of the outstanding social features of contemporary India.

The objective demand of the peasantry is not reform but revolution. Indian peasantry have been sunk to the depths of economic ruin and the resulting deterioration by the exploitation by foreign Imperialism and native landlordism. The salvation of the Indian peasantry, therefore, depends upon the elimination of these dual forces of exploitation. Agrarian reform introduced by a benevolent government will be calculated to intensify the exploitation of the peasantry by bringing the agricultural industry more directly under the capitalist mode of production. Nationalist schemes of agrarian reform, where there are any, do not touch the basic question of land ownership. Any movement to defend the interest of the peasant should have two fundamental principles: 1. the cultivator should be the owner of the soil; 2. the produce of the soil and his labour should belong to the peasant.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II, No. 3, March 1926, 'unsigned review'. SNR.

We are glad to notice that the 'Langal' stands for these two principles. We hope that the new journal will boldly propagate and popularize these principles among the peasant masses—that it will hold out to the peasantry a vivid picture of the life, exploitation and demand of their class, drawn in simple language. The talents of the revolutionary bard, Nazrul Islam, should be devoted to voice the suffering and aspirations of the down-trodden 'dumb millions'.[2] Let him sing for them—to inspire them with the courage to revolt against exploitation and with the hope for a new era of freedom and prosperity. Muzaffar Ahmad's explanation 'Why India is not free', repeated with more force and more clarity, will open the eyes of the nationalist revolutionaries.[3] A historical and theoretical study of the prevailing systems of landownership is invaluable for the formulation of a programme of agrarian revolution which cannot be postponed if Indian society is to progress. Lastly, India must learn from the great revolutionary thinkers and leaders of the world. Indian revolutionaries must arm themselves with the experience accumulated by the revolutionary movements in other countries. From this point of view, 'Langal's practice of dealing with the lives of men like Marx and Lenin is useful. But the biography of neither Marx nor Lenin can be usefully studied unless in connection with the theories and practice of the revolutionary movement they led. The articles in the 'Langal' on this subject do not quite fulfil the purpose. A chronicle of facts of the life of a man is not his biography. As an example of how deficient such a biography is we may take the liberty of pointing out that in the first sentence of the article on Karl Marx is contained a conception of history which Marx refuted. That is, the article on the life of Marx begins with a repudiation of a cardinal principle of the teachings of Marx. The article begins with the statement that the history of the world is the biography of a number of epoch-making men. Marx refuted this subjective conception of history and established that the history of human society is the history of class-struggle.[4]

We venture this friendly criticism, because we are anxious to see that the 'Langal' creditably discharges its historic mission. The proletariat and the peasantry are the inseparable allies in the struggle immediately for democratic national freedom and ultimately for socialism.

Notes

[1] The 'inaugural special' issue of the Bengali weekly *Langal* (The Plough) came out on 16 December, 1925, as the organ of the Labour-Swaraj Party of the Indian National Congress which had been founded in November 1925 by some of the more radical members of the Swaraj Party who had been influenced by M. N. Roy's persistent pleading for the formation of an open people's party committed to complete independence and a programme of agrarian revolution. The chief editor or director (*Pradhan Parichalak*) of the journal was Nazrul Islam; under him was the other editor, Manibhushan Mukhopadhyaya. There were in all fifteen issues; the journal stopped publication with the issue of 15 April 1926; it was reissued under a new name, *Ganavani* (People's Voice), with Muzaffar Ahmad as editor. That *Langal* had 'merged with *Ganavani*' was announced in the editorial of the first issue (12 August 1926) of *Ganavani* which proclaimed itself as the organ of the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal (Bangiya Krishak O Sramikdaler Mukhapatra).

The Labour Swaraj Party organized an All-Bengal Praja Conference at Krishnanagar on 6 February 1926 where the name of the Party was changed to Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal.

[2] The most popular and radical poet of Bengal during the 1920s, Kazi Nazrul Islam achieved instantaneous and phenomenal fame with the publication of his poem *Bidrohi* (The Rebel) at the age of twenty-two and a few months (January 1922). Between 1922 and 1931 he published sixteen volumes of poems, four collections of songs, three novels, three collections of short stories and four volumes of essays. Several of his works were proscribed by the government: the Bengali bi-weekly *Dhumketu* (The Comet) which he brought out in August 1922 was banned and its issue of 26 September seized; he was charged with sedition and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. Later, he formed the Labour Swaraj Party and its manifesto was published under his signature. In his *Rajbandir Jabanbandi* (The Statement of a Political Prisoner) he declared that his 'cry was the cry of the oppressed of the world . . . I have rebelled not only against the injustice of the ruler but my sword of truth has been raised also against my own society, people and country' (translated from the original in Bengali). *Langal* published Nazrul's famous poem *Samyavadi*, it also serialized a translation of Gorky's *Mother* and published the constitution of the Labour Swaraj Party, report of the Kanpur Communist Conference and address of the President at the Krishnanagar Conference where the Labour Swaraj Party was changed to the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal.

In the 1930s Nazrul turned away from radical politics; the death of his son in 1930 and the paralysis of his wife in 1940 were terrible blows: in 1942 he was himself stricken with an incurable cerebral disease which reduced him to a mute and withdrawn invalid for the rest of his long life.

[3] Muzaffar Ahmad was twenty-two when he was contacted at Calcutta by M. N. Roy's emissary Nalini Gupta in 1921. Converted to communism, he became Roy's principal contact in Bengal. He was one of the accused in the Kanpur Conspiracy Case. Released from jail on medical grounds he was one of the group of communists who 'captured' Satyabhakta's Conference at Kanpur in December 1925 and formed the central executive committee of the different communist groups in India. Nazrul Islam was his personal friend

and he was Nazrul's collaborator in editing *Langal*. His article mentioned by Roy was published in the fourth issue of *Langal*, 14 January 1926, under the title 'Bharat Keno Swadhin Noi' (why isn't India independent?). The article has been included in Muzaffar Ahmad, *Prabandha Sankalan*, (Calcutta, 1970, pp. 5–9). *Langal* also published his articles 'Kothay Pratikar', 'Sreni-Sangram', 'Krishak O Sramik Andolan', etc.

[4] The articles in *Langal* on Karl Marx (issue of 23 December 1925) and on Lenin's Russia (7 and 14 January) were written by Devabrata Basu. But *Langal* showed almost equal enthusiasm for 'the extraordinary lifestory of Subhash Chandra Bose' (21 and 28 January). SNR.

The Calcutta Riot*

The antagonism between the Hindus and the Moslems is an old phenomenon in the social life of India. This antagonism, which has its roots in the history of the country, has been fully exploited by British imperialism. It has always provided the basis for the imperialist policy of 'divide and rule'. During the last two decades, the religious conflict broke out into bloody riots on several occasions. In each case the hidden hand of the Government was to be noticed behind the scene. Acts of provocation on the part of the police were the immediate cause of such bloody riots. The latest one in Calcutta has been of an unusually acute nature.

In spite of the fact that Hindu-Moslem unity was one of the planks of the nationalist programme, the bourgeois leaders have totally failed to solve the vexing problem. The reason for this deplorable failure is the inordinate importance given to religion in nationalist agitation. It is also due to the fact that the bourgeois nationalist leaders only searched for a basis of compromise; they could not grasp that essentially the question was a question of national minority.

The Moslem community is a minority of the population. In its earlier stages (until the beginning of the World War) the national movement was almost exclusively a Hindu movement. After having overthrown the decayed Moslem power with the help and connivance of the oppressed Hindu majority, the British conquerors changed their policy. They pretended to be the protector of the Moslem minority as against the possible dictatorship of the Hindu majority. This pretension was backed up by certain favouritism towards the Moslem intelligentsia who received preference over the Hindus as regards State employment. This policy of favouritism kept the advanced elements of the Moslem community away from the nationalist movement. Consequently, the latter became predominantly Hindu and came under the influence of Hindu religious ideology. This made the situation still worse. It enabled Imperialism to play more upon the fear and suspicion of the Moslems. It was pointed out by Imperialist writers that the programme of the Nationalist movement was to establish a

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II No. 5, May 1926. In *The Masses* authorship of the article is credited to 'Secretary to C. C. Textile Workers' Union, USSR'. However, the same text under the same title was published earlier under M. N. Roy's name in *Inprecor*, No. 33, 22 April 1926. SNR.

Hindu Kingdom in India, and that if that programme was realized the Moslems would find themselves in a precarious position: they would be subject to a revengeful tyranny or even driven out of the country as the Moors from Spain. On the other hand, the Government refused to pay any heed to the demands of the nationalist movement on the pretext that it did not represent the view of the entire population. That state of affairs culminated in the organization of the Indian Moslem League under official inspiration, as a standing challenge to the claims of the National Congress to speak on behalf of the entire nation.

The reactionary nature of Hindu nationalism greatly helped the divide and rule policy of imperialism. It strengthened the religious preoccupation of the Moslems who considered themselves Moslems first and Indians last. Whenever necessary the Government with the help of the Mullahs (Moslem priests) could whip up religious fanaticism among the lumpen proletariat and turn the fury against the Hindu nationalists. Moslem fanaticism, on its part, provoked the corresponding passion among the Hindus.

The acuteness of this unfortunate state of affairs was somewhat relieved by the rapid development of native capitalism during the years immediately preceding the World War. Economic interests enabled the bourgeoisie to overcome religious prejudice. Eventually in 1916 nationalism found a common platform.[1] Hindu and Moslem bourgeoisie united in their demand for self-government and fiscal autonomy. Imperialism answered with a very clever move. The limited franchise (embracing only two per cent of the population) granted by the Reforms Act of 1919 was based upon the principle of communal representation. In the beginning the evils of this system were not so clearly felt. They were temporarily drowned by the gigantic mass upheaval of the post-war years. The inclusion of the redemption of the Islamic Khalifat (*sic*) in the Indian nationalist programme created an apparent unity among the Hindus and Moslems. But these tactics at the same time encouraged extra-territorial patriotism among the Moslems. The failure of the Khilafat movement has disturbed the apparent unity; but the results of religious fanaticism are playing havoc. As a matter of fact the reactionary activities and irresponsible pronouncements of Hindu leaders like Lajpat Rai, Malaviya, etc., are the immediate cause of the present acuteness of the Hindu-Moslem question.

The religio-communal problem, dangerous as it is, does not, however, affect all the social strata; only certain elements of the population are affected by it. A revolutionary outlook on the part of the nationalist leaders would render the solution of the problem much easier. But the nationalists in general are totally devoid of any understanding of the social basis of this problem. Besides, the leaders themselves are full of religious and communal prejudices, which actually frustrate all their frantic attempts for unity. For instance, the Calcutta riots were precipitated by the action of a few hundred Arya Samajists.[2]

The office-hunting intelligentsia are the spokesmen of communal interests, and the lumpen proletariat in the cities are the instrument with which the bloody conflicts are precipitated. There has hardly been any instance of religious riot in the countryside, in spite of the ignorance and religious prejudice of the peasantry. There class conflict cuts across the artificially fermented religious fanaticism. The landowning class, just as the peasantry, belong to both the religious communities. A Moslem landowner exploits his tenant irrespective of religion. So also does the Hindu landlord. Only in areas where the landowners and peasants as classes belong to opposite religions does there exist a certain social basis for religious conflicts. This was the case in the Moplah rebellion of 1920–21. The peasants were all Moslems and the landlords Hindus. Consequently, although possessed of a certain religious character, the Moplah revolt was an agrarian revolt.[3]

Among the proletariat, religious conflict has practically disappeared. For instance, the day after the bloody riots in Calcutta, 7,000 workers (Hindus and Moslems) employed in the Gammipun jute mills 20 miles away went out on strike as a protest against the ill-treatment of a Moslem worker by an English engineer. The police were called in to suppress the strike. Blood was shed; but the cause on that occasion was just the contrary—it united the struggle of the working class irrespective of religion.

The Calcutta event has its special reasons. It is a part of a plan carefully laid down by the Government to break up the Swaraj Party, which, in the province of Bengal is under certain revolutionary influence. In Bengal the two communities are nearly balanced, the Moslems having a small majority. A pact between the Hindus and Moslems strengthened the position of the Swarajists in the last elections. The next elections will take place at the end of the year. The plan of the Government is to break up the Hindu-Moslem pact in order that the Swarajist majority in the provincial Legislative Council is eliminated.[4] The bankruptcy of the Swaraj programme of parliamentary obstruction has disrupted the nationalist bloc. Now the government is endeavouring to win the Moslems to its side by promising the introduction of communal representation in all branches of the public services: in other words, by promising Government jobs to the Moslem intelligentsia. In order to realize this sinister plan it must be shown that the communisties are in a perpetual state of warfare and fly at each others' throats at any opportunity. The agitation for the organization of a Moslem Party, obviously under official inspiration strengthened the hands of the reactionary Hindu leaders, who are ever ready for an anti-Moslem campaign. There are a thousand and one pretences on which the lumpen proletariat in large cities like Calcutta can be egged into a street brawl. A few bottles of alcohol and pieces of silver always work miracles. That is how the bloody riots of Calcutta, the news of which has been flashed all over the world by Reuter, as a proof of India's incapacity to govern herself, were engineered.

The growing importance of the proletariat and the rapid development of class consciousness amongst the poor peasantry render these artificially provoked religious riots of much less gravity than they appear. Nevertheless, the problem of a national minority is there. Bourgeois nationalism, under the ideological influence of the reactionary intelligentsia, has failed to tackle the problem. But approached from the angle of class interests and class struggle this problem becomes comparatively easy.

Notes

[1] This refers to the Lucknow Pact of December 1916 between the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League. A memorial had been presented to the Viceroy in October 1916 by nineteen non-official members of the Imperial Legislative Council calling for Representative Government and Dominion Status. The Pact accepted the principle of separate electorates for the Muslim community, and it was agreed that in five out of seven provinces the Muslims were to be given over-representation.

[2] According to the Report of the Riots Enquiry Committee of the Indian Association, communal riot started at Calcutta on 2 April 1926 when the annual procession of the Arya Samaj reached Dinu Mia's mosque at the time of the *azan* (call to prayer), and one of the drummers kept beating the drum in spite of requests and instructions to stop the music. Fighting between the two communities started in Harrison Road and then spread like wildfire throughout Calcutta. In the course of a fortnight of rioting over 50 people were killed, about 700 injured, many shops, temples, mosques and gurdwaras were set on fire and razed. Riots occurred again in April when the casualties were 66 killed and 391 injured; and then in July which caused 26 deaths and 226 cases of serious injuries. There was more than enough evidence that the riots were preplanned and leaders of both communities incited communal passions to gain political advantage. *I.A. Annual Report 1926*; *Indian Statutory Commission* (Simon Commission) *Report*, 1930, Vol. IV.

[3] The Moplahs claimed to be descendants of the Arabs who had settled in the Malabar Coast about the eighth or ninth century A.D. They were mostly peasants and had a tradition of militancy. During the Khilafat-Noncooperation movement the Moplahs rose in rebellion (August 1921), set up an independent Kingdom in Ernad and Walluvanad, killed a few Europeans and many Hindus, but by the end of 1921 the rebellion was crushed by the government which used several battalions of the army. According to the official report three thousand Moplahs were killed and fifty thousand surrendered, (*India in 1921–22*).

[4] The Lucknow Pact had given the Muslims over-representation in the Muslim minority provinces but under-representation in Bengal and the Punjab. In the Bengal Council formed under the 1919 Act, elected Hindus numbered 57, elected Muslims 39, and the

remaining seats were held by Europeans, Anglo-Indians, commercial bodies, nominated Indian Christians, depressed classes, labour and not more than twenty officials. In 1923 Chittaranjan Das forged a Hindu-Muslim alliance in Bengal, and in the Council elections the Swaraj Party's candidates captured three-quarters of the seats in the Hindu Constituencies and half of the seats in the Muslim Constituencies (*Indian Statutory Commission Report* Vol. VIII, p. 109). In the elections after the Calcutta riots of 1926, only one Muslim was returned to the new Council who was a Swarajist; 'the other 38 pledged themselves to work under the Constitution in their own community's interest' (J. H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society*,. Berkeley, 1968, p. 280). SNR.

Punjab Money-lenders' Bill*

The systematic Hindu opposition to the money-lenders' bill in the Punjab Legislative Council reveals the economic antagonism which plays a great role in the communal dissensions in India. Let it not be forgotten that the Punjab is the centre of the Hindu-Moslem conflicts that radiate from there to all other parts of India. The fact that nearly all the money-lenders in the province happen to be Hindus and the debtors mostly Moslems has made the money-lenders' bill a focus of the communal antagonism. In itself, the bill is but a moderate measure proposed to control the malpractices and fraudulent dealings of the usurers. No Indian, whether Hindu or Moslem, who has in the least the welfare of the masses at heart, can hesitate to support the measure, much less to organize a violent opposition to it.

Let us examine the facts regarding the money-lenders and the indebtedness of the Punjab peasantry in some detail. The struggle between the toiling peasant and his ruthless exploiter, the money-lender, is very old. The cultivator's effort to keep body and soul together, living as he does on the margin of subsistence, does not always succeed. It is calculated that during a cycle of five years, in one year he gets good crops, in another bad, and during the rest indifferent, neither good nor bad. This is in normal circumstances; the havoc worked by casual famines is not taken into account. Under these conditions the peasant has often to borrow money to keep up his family. In going to borrow he walks straight into the widespread net of the money-lenders from which it is almost impossible to extricate oneself. In nearly every village or small town, there is a local trader who is a professional money-lender. He always prays to God to cause drought in the country so that he may easily catch the poor peasant into his wily net. In forty cases out of a hundred the peasant has to mortgage his piece of land for the loan.[1]

During the closing two decades of the last century a considerable portion of land was transferred to the money-lenders. Taking advantage of the precarious economic conditions of the cultivator, the money-lender was able to impose such hard terms in the mortgage transaction that it always ended in sale. During the period of 1875–1893, 1,179,000 acres of cultivated land in different parts of the province passed into the hands of the usurers. The usurer parasite was thus eating into the vitals of the peasantry, threatening in a short period their complete ruin. Destitution and discontent began to grow. The British Government, which never loses an opportunity to pose as the friend and protector of the Indian masses, intervened and pased in 1901 the Punjab Land Alienation Act, by virtue of which the professional money-lender could not dispossess an agriculturist who had cultivated his land for more than twenty years. Some more legislations were passed, by which the peasant could neither be evicted, nor arrested for debt; his plough, cattle, implements and seeds could not be attached for the redemption of his debt.[2]

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II No. 6, June 1926. Unsigned article. SNR.

These legal measures helped the peasant only to keep alive in order to work for the money-lenders, landlords and the Government. His complete ruin was not profitable for his exploiters. But his material condition was not essentially improved. As a matter of fact this cannot be done except through the very radical remedy of doing away with the landlords, money-lenders and other exploiters. The poor ignorant farmer was forced and enticed more and more into the mire of indebtedness. There is a proverb in the province: Once in debt, always in debt. The manipulations of the clever money-lender do not allow the peasant to free himself from his iron grip. In the best years the surplus produce is so small that the interest is paid with difficulty, and from the principal there is no escape. The usual rate of interest is 18¾ per cent for cash and 25 per cent for grain. In some areas rates go as high as 50 per cent and over. This is not all. The money-lender charges compound interest at the rate of 50 per cent for cash and 100 per cent for grain. At 60 per cent (a rate by no means uncommon in India) a debt of one rupee will become 100 rupees in eight years. The peasant's resources are limited to the crop which is hardly threshed before the money-lender swoops down and carries away from the threshing floor all but what is necessary to keep the cultivator and his family alive till the following harvest. The money-lender, by showing so much mercy, does not want to kill the hen which lays the golden eggs for him.

The following figures present a vivid picture of the economic condition of the Punjab peasantry:

1. Only 17 per cent of landed proprietors are free of debt. These mostly belong to the landlord class living on land rent.
2. The average debt per indebted proprietor (a peasant holding a piece of land) is Rs 463.
3. Total debt represents 15½ times the land revenue paid by all concerned whether indebted or not.
4. Mortgage debt is 40 per cent of the entire debt; in some districts it is 60 per cent.
5. Average peasant proprietor's debt is equal to three years of his net income.

6. Total agricultural debt amounts to 90 crores or 19 times the land revenue.

7. Annual interest charges amount to 13 crores or nearly three times the total land revenue of the province.

The money-lender is not content with charging exorbitant rates of interest. His evil genius takes recourse to various malpractices which cannot be controlled or even detected by the ignorant peasant. These are:

1. An anna is deducted from every rupee advanced and interest is charged upon the whole amount.

2. When the balance is struck the debtor may be forced to go before the sub-registrar and state that he has received the whole amount in cash, although most of it is accumulated interest.

3. Debts are misrepresented in the ledger by entering inferior grains as if they were wheat.

4. No interest is allowed on repayments in kind and not as much as is due on credits in cash.

5. A full year's interest is charged on a loan though the latter may only have been taken a few months before the balance is struck.

6. Accounts are kept in such a loose unintelligible way that interest cannot be separated from the principal.

7. Old grain is doled out for food in the cold weather and repayment is taken a few months later in wheat or cash plus 25 or 50 per cent.

8. The bulk of a man's grain is taken straight from the threshing floor so as to compel him a month later to borrow at a high rate of interest for the payment of his land revenue.[3]

The present money-lender's bill, far from attacking the *extortions* of the usurers, only seeks to check some of the above mentioned evil practices. The proposed legislation would require the money-lenders to register themselves with the Government so that their accounts may be checked and controlled at any time. Even if the bill is passed these evils will not be eradicated as the petty officials in charge of controlling the ledgers of the usurers cannot be expected to be above bribery and will be only too glad to become partners in the spoils of the money-lenders.

In spite of all this very moderate character of the bill a hard fight is being put up against it in the Council as well as outside. When a year ago the Bill was first introduced in the Council it was immediately denounced by the Hindu members as a communal measure. This incident points out the economic basis of communal dissensions which baffle the efforts of the nationalist leaders. The money-lenders are practically all Hindus, while the overwhelming majority of the indebted peasantry are Moslems. A legislative measure checking the flagrant abuses of the Hindu usurers is not taken on its merit, but made a butt of communal antagonism.

Lala Lajpat Rai's attitude towards the bill is remarkable.[4] After shedding some crocodile tears for the ruined peasantry of the Punjab (which practice is very common with the exploiting master class) he writes in his organ 'The People': 'If the Bill is passed in its present form and enforced vigorously the blow aimed at the 40,000 money-lenders of the province will hit a far more numerous class. Restriction of credit on a vast scale that will be bound to result from an enforcement of the provisions of the proposed measure will hit agriculture and industry alike'. In his anxiety for the already overflowing pockets of 40,000 individuals, Lala forgets the rest of 20,000,000 who are going deeper and deeper into the mire of misery and starvation. Of course, he pays a lip service to the wretched condition of the toilers on the land. But what does that amount to in plain language? He warns them that unless they keep quiet in their submission to money-lender sharks, they will be given no credit, which will put them in an embarrassing position. At the same time, he is encouraging his Shylock brethren not to accept anything below a pound of flesh. This shameful attitude of Lajpat Rai does not reflect his personal views; it is determined by the interests of an entire class. In view of the coming elections it is very important for the bourgeois politicians to win the good graces of the merchant and usurer who belong to the fortunate 2 per cent electorate. In search for votes the nationalist parliamentarians would not hesitate to sacrifice the interests of 20,000,000 poor peasants on the altar of the money-lenders' greed. It is not for nothing that the Lala calls the attention of the Swarajists to mobilize their forces against the Bill. He has recommended that the Swarajists must return to the Council to vote against the bill. New elections are pending, and the group which has the support of the financiers will have a greater chance to oust their rivals. The mockery of the whole affair is that it has been made a Hindu-Moslem question. To secure a few seats in the Council the nationalist politicians would pour oil on the already devouring flames of communal dissension. But as far as the masses are concerned there is no communal question. The Hindu or Sikh peasant is as much in the clutches of the *banias* as the Moslems.

Notes

[1] Roy's direct source of information of the situation in the Punjab was initially Ghulam Hussain and his Urdu journal, *Inqilab*; later it was *Kirti* which began publication in February 1926. But most of the details in this article were drawn from the influential contemporary work, M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt* (1925). Probably he was also familiar with the nineteenth century study *Musulman and Moneylenders in the Punjab* (1886) by S. S. Thorburn, and such contemporary works as H. Calvert,

Wealth and Welfare in the Punjab (1922) and E. D. Lucas, *The Economic Life of a Punjab Village* (1920).

[2] Details of such legislative reforms were given in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India* (Cmd. 3232 with 16 volumes of evidence, 1928). The Commission came to India in March 1926 and produced its report in 1928. Of course, at the time of Roy's writing the Report was not yet available, but the enactments were known.

[3] The source is M. L. Darling who calculated that in 1921 India's total rural indebtedness amounted to between 500 and 550 crores of rupees. According to the Central Banking Inquiry Report rural indebtedness rose to Rs 900 crores in 1930. *The Report of the Royal Commission* recorded that in 1926 in the Punjab the wages of agricultural workers were 12 annas per day *Documents of the Royal Commission*, Vol. I, p. 206.

[4] Roy met Lajpat Rai (1865–1928) in New York some months before escaping to Mexico; each formed a good opinion of the other from their brief acquaintance, (Lajpat Rai, *Autobiographical Writings*, Jullundur, 1965, pp. 216–218; M. N. Roy. *Memoirs*, 1964, pp. 26–29). Lajpat Rai was born in a Hindu Aggarwal family in the Punjab; in his youth he came under the deep influence of the Arya Samaj and became a militant Hindu nationalist; he was deported to Burma in 1907 but released after a few months. He lived abroad from 1913 to 1920. Gandhi's leadership did not attract him and after the collapse of non-cooperation he joined the Swarajya Party. In October 1928 while leading a boycott procession against the Simon Commission he was hit on the head and the chest by the police, and died of the injuries in November. SNR.

The Passing of the Empire*

Engels wrote that the decline of Britain's political power would make the British working class revolutionary. The latest general strike is the greatest revolutionary event in England since the Chartist movement. The British working class has entered the path of revolution. The political power of Britain is on the decline. The Empire is passing.

The Empire was built as a result of the search for markets for the produce of the ever-growing British industries. British industries in their turn were built on the basis of coal. Therefore, it is all the more significant that the immediate cause of the revolutionary shock felt in England should be the crisis in the coal-mining industry. This indicates that the basis of Britain's power is decayed. The Empire is tottering.

After the downfall of the medieval religio-military colonial Empire of Spain began the period of commercial Imperialism. Mercantile adventurers from the European countries went after the fabulous treasures of the East. All wanted to get rich by trading in the valuable and rare products of the Orient, particularly India. That search after lucrative Eastern trade in course of time developed into more lucrative plunder and pillage . . . Britain appeared on the scene comparatively late . . . But when Britain did appear on the Eastern scene, she was equipped to make up for the delay. The discovery of coal and its application for the generation of steam gave British capitalism a tremendous impetus. Coal and its use as fuel largely contributed to those epoch-making mechanical inventions that caused the great industrial revolution and placed England at the van of capitalist development. As the workshop of the world, England sent her commodities to the four corners of the earth. Capture of markets led to the conquests of countries and continents. The character of her trade with the East changed. Instead of importing, she began to flood the Eastern markets with goods manufactured by machines run with sweated labour at home. In competition with the machine-made commodities, the old handicrafts of the East were ruined, thus placing the Eastern market under British monopoly. Not only the local handicrafts went down in the struggle for existence; the Dutch and French Eastern Empires also collapsed before the onslaughts of British Imperialism based on capitalism in possession of coal and iron. Thus it was coal originally which supplied the motive power to British colonial expansion. The foundation of the Empire was cemented by black gold.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II No. 7, July 1926. Unsigned article, slightly shortened here, with deletions indicated by three dots (. . .). SNR.

The possession of almost inexhaustible coal deposits has been the cornerstone of British imperialism. Thanks to it Britain exercised a dominating position in the industrial world uptil the world war. The crisis in this basic industry, which precipitated the present revolutionary situation in Britain, is not a passing crisis. It is a permanent crisis. It baffles all capitalist remedies. It is so because the other key industries (iron, steel, ship-building, etc.) are also in a critical position. This in its turn reacts upon the coal-mining industry, thus rendering the crisis therein more insurmountable. This is a real vicious circle. Caught in this vicious circle, British capitalism declines day by day.

The political power of Britain was built on her economic position. The Empire rested upon the foundation of the metropolitan industries. The economic position is shaken; metropolitan industries are in a permanent crisis; therefore, Britain's political might is on the wane. The general strike that convulsed Britain—cast over the tight little island, the deadly shadow of revolution—is an event in the historical process of the decline of the Empire. The lesson of this great event will not be lost on the hundreds of millions of colonial peoples.

Historically, the position can be thus stated, but the historic process may not reach the point of culmination in the immediate future. It may be comparatively still far off. What is certain, however, is that the revolutionary movement has become a living thing in Britain. The British working class has become revolutionary, an evergrowing vanguard being conscious of the fact.

It will be a mistake to think that the British bourgeoisie, so accustomed to lording it over at home and abroad, are deprived of all resources. As a matter of fact they fully appreciate the gravity of the situation and are exploring all conceivable possibilities for repairing it. They propose to operate in two directions: in the colonies and at home. On the one hand, their plan is to increase the proceeds of colonial plunder and on the other hand, they are determined to lower the standard of living of the working class at home. The first is to be realized through the policy of imperial preference and industrialization of the economically backward colonies. At home the wages and hours of work are insolently attacked. The two must go hand in hand. If the policy of industrializing the colonies is to lead to the economic stabilization and political safety of the Empire, it must be realized with the aid of British capital. At least a dominating share must be retained for the British capitalists. But this requires available surplus capital in the metropolis. The strength of modern imperialism lies in finance—in the capital exported abroad to create markets for the product of metropolitan industry. The export of capital from the metropolis is the result of accumulation caused by capitalist production. In other words, hundreds of millions of Asiatic and African peoples are enslaved by means of capital created out of the unpaid labour at home. Therefore, a revolutionary crisis in England is bound to have a far-reaching effect on the colonies.

In the last years the British bourgeoisie managed to raise the capital demanded for the home industries, but foreign investment progressively diminished. The situation became so alarming that last year an embargo was placed upon the export of capital. Capital could not be sent out for investment abroad (mostly in the colonies) without injuring the industries at home. On the other hand, accumulation abroad also diminished. The substantial figure of 'invisible export' always indicated imperialist prosperity. The surplus import was paid for by the profit and interests of capital invested abroad. In the days of prosperity, a large margin was available for reinvestment after all the payments had been made. In 1925, the margin was reduced to the almost insignificant figure of £28,000,000.

The situation came to this: the project of overcoming the post-war crisis by expanding colonial markets could not be realized unless there were capital in the metropolis available for export. But export of capital depends upon accumulation which, in its turn, is possible only when the surplus value produced by the British proletariat is increased. In other words, the Empire can be saved, the British bourgeoisie can survive the crisis, only be reducing the standard of living of the working class. Hence, the all-round determined capitalist offensive which in the first week of May drove England to the verge of revolution.[1] Britain can repair her weakened political position only at the expense of the working class.

The significance of the situation in England may not be fully understood by the colonial peoples. In the colonies, except in limited circles, the entire British nation is looked upon as the agency of oppression. The British Labour movement did remarkable little to remove this wrong impression. On the contrary, the British Labour Party in office acted just as any other imperialist government. Even on the eve of the May crisis, when the horizon of Britain was overcast with ominous clouds of revolution, the Independent Labour Party, through the resolution on 'Empire and Peace' reiterated its faith in the humanitarian nature of the Empire, and affirmed that a Commonwealth of Nations was in the making in the framework of the British Empire. The I.L.P. resolved to support the 'development of systems of full self-government in all countries at the earliest opportunity *in* *accordance with their racial characteristics*, and the extension to all non-self-governing countries, in the transition period, of a re-constituted mandate system, instead of the control being left to single powers'.

The I.L.P. would grant self-government to the colonial peoples 'in accordance with their racial characteristics'. The theory of the 'white man's burden' lurks behind this liberalism. The British bourgeoisie also say the same thing: democratic institutions of the West are not suitable to Asiatic and African conditions. The I.L.P. is also of this point of view. The rulers belonging to the superior white race should be the judge of the time and nature of self-government suitable for the inferior black and brown races! The infamous system of mandates should also be continued. The liberalism of the I.L.P. consisted in the stipulation that Germany should be given a place in the sun from which she had been dislodged—the white bourgeoisie should collectively shoulder the Christian mission of civilizing (that means terrorizing, bombing and shooting) the coloured heathens. . .

But the General Strike presented the British proletariat in a totally different light. It revealed what a wide chasm divides the British bourgeoisie from the British working class. It indicated that class antagonism drives the British proletariat to declare war upon the bourgeoisie. How could they lend their support to imperialist adventures of the bourgeoisie which threaten to reduce them to the level of the colonial coolie? The General Strike showed that objectively the British Labour movement stands for something entirely different from what MacDonald, Thomas, Henderson & Co. advocate. The British working class has nothing in common with the British ruling class. The latter lives and thrives as much at the expense of the working class at home as by exploiting the colonial peoples.

The days are gone when the British bourgeoisie could corrupt the upper strata of the home proletariat by parting with an insignificant portion of the colonial plunder. There was a period when the entire working class of Britain was indirectly benefited by imperialist expansion. This material factor was responsible for the non-revolutionary nature of the British labour movement. MacDonald, Henderson, Thomas & Co. are the products of that non-revolutionary epoch.[2] But things are totally changed. Today, the Empire does not even give employment to the British proletariat. . . Over a million workers are permanently unemployed. Wages are attacked in all the industries. Demands for longer hours come from all sides. In short, for the proletariat the Empire has become not an asset but a burden. But the British bourgeoisie is wedded to the Empire. Its fate is tied with the fate of the Empire. Disintegration of the Empire will spell the ruin of the British bourgeoisie. Weakening of Britain's political power leads to the revolutionization of the labour movement. Why? Because Britain loses her political power in proportion as her economic grip on the world slackens. The system of capitalist production and distribution is so much dislocated that the British bourgeoisie cannot assure the home proletariat steady employment and a human standard of living. Consequently, the working class is forced to fight for existence. Since capitalism cannot reorganize the industries so as to guarantee a living wage and human existence to the proletariat, the latter takes up the fight for Socialism. Thus the struggle ceases to be an economic struggle for hours and wages. It becomes a political struggle for power. . .

The General Strike will remove the wrong conception prevailing in the colonies that the British working class is as imperialist as the British bourgeoisie. This will clear the way for the united action of the oppressed colonial people and the British proletariat against imperialism.[3] The knowledge that the enemy can be threatened in the rear by a revolutionary upheaval at home will naturally encourage the oppressed nationalities in their struggle against imperialist domination.

There will be still another effect of a more far-reaching nature. The maturing of the revolutionary forces at home, as demonstrated by the General Strike, will influence imperialist politics. With such a danger at home one cannot afford to court troubles in the far-off colonies. Consequently, the new policy of bribing the upper strata of the native bourgeoisie will be speedily put into action in order to normalize the situation in the Colonies. But concessions to the colonial bourgeoisie will, in their turn, inevitably undermine the strength of imperialism, especially in this period of shrinking accumulation of capital at home. Thus the process of disintegration of the Empire will be quickened.

The compromise between imperialism and the colonial bourgeoisie will introduce still another factor in the situation. This factor will also contribute to the disruption of the Empire. The compromise, to be profitable to both the parties, must necessarily intensify the exploitation of the colonial masses. So, the class struggle will become sharper in the Colonies, deepening and broadening the revolutionary significance of the struggle for national freedom. The more the liberation movement in the colonies will assume a working class character, the closer will be its relation with the British proletariat, and the more powerful will be the united anti-imperialist forces.

The first challenge of the British proletariat to the bourgeoisie is miscarried, thanks first to sabotage and then to open treachery of the counter-revolutionary leaders.[4] The first round in the historical fight could not even be the 'full-dress rehearsal' of the coming revolution as the events of 1905 were in Russia. But the proletariat have tasted blood, so to say. They have felt their power and have discovered the weak spots of the movement. On the other hand, the decayed foundation of the Empire has been laid bare. The General Strike can be considered to be the signal for all the anti-imperialist forces to rally in the common fight.

Notes

[1] The strike of the coal miners which led to the General Strike in Britain in May 1926 was seen by the Communist International as 'an event of historic importance'. On 1 May, the government declared a state of emergency in Britain and troops were sent to Lancashire, Scotland and Wales. On 3 May, the Trade Union Congress called a General Strike by a vote of 3,653,527 against 49,911. On 5 May, the Executive Committee of the Communist International (of which Roy was a member) issued a Manifesto which called on 'the entire world proletariat' 'to support the great struggle of the British proletariat' (*Inprecor,* 7 May 1926). The Red International of Trade Unions (RILU) proposed joint action to the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) and offered to contribute two and half million roubles to the strike fund, but this was rejected by the General Council of the TUC. The Comintern Executive's Manifesto declared: 'Since the days of the Chartists Britain has seen no movement so powerful as the present one . . . this great struggle opens a new era in the class struggle not only in Britain but throughout the world'. (*Inprekorr* vi, 70, p. 1111).

[2] These leaders of the Labour Party were described by the historian H. A. L. Fisher in the following words: 'The leaders of British labour, Mr Ramsay MacDonald . . . Mr Arthur Henderson, Mr Thomas . . . were as far as possible from being revolutionaries. Mr MacDonald, though a pacifist, was by temperament a poetical Highland Tory . . . Mr Thomas a full blown Imperialist'. *A History of Europe*, London, 1946, p. 1209.

[3] Exactly one year before the publication of this article in *The Masses*, at the Colonial Conference held at Amsterdam on 11 and 12 July 1925, Roy had strongly objected to the attitude of the British Communist Party which 'smacks of imperialism' and its efforts 'to control work conducted in the British Colonies'. The Comintern then officially confirmed Roy's authority and in accordance with its instruction a Foreign Bureau of the Communist Party of India was established with Roy as Chairman and two other members, Clemens Dutt from CPGB and Sipassi (Muhammad Ali) who was Roy's trusted lieutenant. *Communist Papers*, Cmd. 2682, London 1926.

[4] The General Strike lasted nine days although the miners' strike was continued for seven months. The Comintern Executive's 'Theses On the Lessons of the General Strike' bitterly attacked the General Council of the British TUC for sabotaging the strike. 'The working class was demoralized by its leaders and lost the biggest battle in the history of the English labour movement'. (*Inprekorr*, 15 June 1926, VI, 84, p. 1339). However, the British Communist Party gained from the strike; its membership increased during 1926 from 6000 to 12000 (*Inprekorr*, 5 February 1927); so did its importance to the Comintern and its influence on the Communists in India. SNR.

THE FUTURE OF INDIAN POLITICS

By
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* The pagination given on this page follows that of the original edition which gave no publication date, but references in the text make it clear that it was written in 1925–26 and other sources establish that it was published in June or July of 1926. The original edition contained an advertisement of Roy's *Open Letter to Macdonald, One Year of Non-Cooperation* and *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation*; also of R. Palme Dutt's *Modern India* ('appearing shortly'), and of books by Lenin, Stalin and Bukharin, all 'obtainable from 16, King Street, Covent Garden, London W.C.2.' SNR

India in Transition had established M. N. Roy in 1922 as a principal Marxist interpreter of the dynamics of colonial exploitation and of the class-differentiation taking place in contemporary India. The reputation was enhanced by *The Future of Indian Politics*. Published in 1926 when Roy was at the height of his Comintern career it carried considerable authority and had much influence on the radical intelligentsia in India and abroad. Besides the English edition, a simultaneous German edition under the title *Indiens Politische Zukunft* was published from Hamburg and Berlin.

The position initially put forward by Roy at the Second Congress and explicated in *India in Transition* was further developed and brought up-to-date in *The Future of Indian Politics*. In Roy's view, British capitalism was trying to overcome its serious post-war crisis by 'drawing at least the upper strata of the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie within the economic orbit of imperialism'. This was reflected in its new policy of Protection. To the imperialist economics of compromise the Indian bourgeoisie responded positively by adopting the politics of compromise. By becoming a junior partner of British imperialism the Indian bourgeoisie betrayed the National struggle which it claimed to lead but which it actually exploited to strengthen its bargaining position with the British. However, within India the social forces which were opposed to both imperialist and indigenous exploitation ('workers, peasantry, small traders, artisans, employees, students, petty bourgeois intellectuals etc.') were becoming more articulate and assertive. Successful prosecution of the struggle for political independence and social and economic emancipation required organization of 'a democratic party of the people with a programme of revolutionary nationalism which will bind together all the oppressed classes of contemporary Indian society, namely, the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry, and the proletariat. Under the present conditions, the first two will constitute the overwhelming majority; but the proletariat will act as the conscious vanguard of the democratic army—as the leaven of the gigantic mass'.

The Future of Indian Politics being a legal publication, the details of his organizational proposals were not explicated here. These were provided in a series of confidential epistolary instructions to his communist contacts in India. Several of these letters were intercepted and copied by the Intelligence department before forwarding them to the addressees; they were subsequently produced as prosecution evidence in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. In them Roy proposed the formation of a secret and tightly knit Communist Party, which would be a section of the Communist International, an open legal and broadbased Workers' and Peasants' Party to provide cover to the Communist Party and to be controlled by it, and a People's Party which would mobilize all sections of society except those engaged in the growing senior-junior partnership between imperialism and native vested interests. Whether the Indian National Congress could be transformed into the proposed People's Party, or a separate parallel party of revolutionary nationalism with a minimum programme of national democratic revolution would have to be organized, was left open at this stage.

Throughout the 1920s there were in the Comintern organization not a few who were bitterly jealous of Roy's intellectual eminence and who were hostile to his views regarding developments in colonial and semi-colonial countries. His forthrightness and independence of spirit together with the fact that he was the only Asian theorist of standing in the International caused a good deal of heart-burning in the very predominantly white *apparatchiki*. His critics usually cited Lenin's Theses at the Second Congress as their authority and accused Roy of 'Left Sectarianism' *a la* Rosa Luxemburg. Their hostility and organized pressure did not, however, prevent Roy from arguing, propagating and developing his views, or from getting elected to responsible Comintern positions till the Sixth Comintern Congress (1928). At the Second Congress the importance of his view had been publicly recognized by Lenin; and after the Fifth Congress his view was backed by Stalin in his communication of 31 July 1924 to Roy's principal critic and opponent D. Z. Manuilsky. In his speech to the students of KUTV on 18 May 1925, Stalin followed Roy's division of colonial and semi-colonial countries into three categories; he agreed with Roy's diagnosis that 'on all important issues the reformist section of the native bourgeoisie in India has already rallied to the side of imperialism'; and he confirmed Roy's prescription that 'the immediate tasks confronting the revolutionary movement in colonies where capitalism was well developed are . . . b) to set up a nationalist revolutionary coalition of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals, as a counterpoise to the coalition of the great bourgeoisie with the imperialists' (*Problems of Leninism*). As late as 9 May 1927, Stalin explained in a written reply to a question from one comrade Marchulin that he considered the position taken by Roy at the Second Congress to be quite valid and still very relevant. According to Stalin, 'Lenin's theses had been written and published long before the Second Congress opened, long before the representatives from the colonial countries had arrived, and prior to the discussion in the Special Commission of the Second Congress. And since the discussion in the Congress Commission revealed the necessity for singling out from the backward colonies of the East such countries as China and India, the necessity for the Supplementary Theses arose'. In his view Lenin in drafting his theses had 'in mind such countries as Central Asia, Persia, where there is practically no proletariat', whereas Roy's Supplementary Theses were needed to comprehend countries like India and China which had experienced some industrial development and had a growing proletariat, even if it was still small in size (J. Stalin, *On Chinese Revolution*, 1975).

Although Roy's own position was repeatedly made clear, the theses adopted by the succeeding Congresses of the Comintern were not free from ambiguity. The power struggle inside the Soviet Union contributed to shifts of emphasis in the Comintern's policy and affected the positions of the members of its hierarchy. In 1925 the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain had started trying to gain control of the very young Communist movement in India. This caused tension and conflict between CPGB and Roy which was sought to be resolved at a Conference at Amsterdam on 11 and 12 July 1925, chaired by Roy's friend H. Sneevliet. Roy's authority was affirmed; the newly created foreign bureau of the CPI which included a representative of CPGB was kept under his supervision. In 1926 not only was *The Future of Indian Politics* published in London but its thesis was also echoed by the CPGB's principal publicist Rajani Palme Dutt in his book *Modern India*. That Dutt's book was published in London subsequent to Roy's book is made evident by the announcement inside Roy's book that R. P. Dutt's *Modern India* would be 'appearing shortly' from the same publishing house. R. P. Dutt's brother Clemens was Roy's friend and a decent person. But the younger brother was ambitious and had fewer scruples. According to Philip Spratt, Rajani's Finnish wife, Anneta Pekkala, was a member of the Comintern's secret service and she completely dominated him. After the Sixth Congress which R. P. Dutt also did not attend, he saved his own position by repudiating Roy and joining in the officially sponsored distortion of Roy's view by Otto Kuusinen and other powerful members of the *apparatchiki*.

At the Sixth Congress in 1928 Roy's view would be deliberately misrepresented in his absence by his opponents and rivals and violently attacked. After Roy's break with the Comintern, this deliberate misrepresentation would come to be regarded by many as Roy's real view, thanks to official communist propaganda. At that time he was attacked as a 'Right Deviationist'. In recent years official Communist publicists and scholars have revived the charge of 'Left Sectarianism' (G. Adhikari ed., *Documents of the History of the CPI*, Vols. I, II and III; R. A. Ulyanovsky ed., *The Comintern and the East*, 2 vols; A. Reznikov, *The Comintern and the East*, etc). The argument of *The Future of*

Indian Politics has enough intrinsic merit and historic significance to survive such shifting positions of Roy's critics and demand perusal by new generations of readers.

Unless otherwise indicated all footnotes in this section are by the author and belong to the 1926 edition. SNR.

Preface

In this book the historic necessity for a People's Party in India is dealt with. The question of the party of the proletariat is purposely left out. The role of the proletariat in the struggle for national freedom and democratization of the country is defined only in broad outlines. Political organization of the proletariat, its structure and programme, do not enter into the purview of the book. The proletariat is considered as a component part of the Nationalist forces. By the omission of the question, the importance of the party of the proletariat is not in the least minimized. Neither is the People's Party meant to be a substitute for the party of the proletariat. The object of this book is to show a way to the revolutionary Nationalist forces; to point out the cause of the decline of bourgeois Nationalism; to expose the tendency of compromise underneath the verbal radicalism of the upper middle class; to indicate the historic necessity for the fight for freedom; and to enunciate in general the programme and organizational form the fight is bound to assume in its coming phases. Although the proletariat is destined to act as the lever of the struggle for national liberation, there are other social classes immensely more numerous than the proletariat whose importance in the fight for democratic national freedom cannot be minimized. The future of Indian politics will still be dominated by the interests of these classes—intellectuals, artisans, small traders and peasantry. How to organize these forces of national revolution in a democratic party is the immediate problem before the Indian revolutionaries. The proletariat being the revolutionary vanguard must help to solve this problem. The hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle for national freedom should be so exercised as not to circumscribe, but to intensify the fullest display of the energy of the forces of national revolution. This will be done through the people's Party as demonstrated in the following pages.

The Author.

PART I

THE ECONOMICS OF COMPROMISE

CHAPTER ONE

The Social Basis of Imperialism

Bourgeois Nationalism in India had ended in a complete compromise with imperialism, as was predicted years ago by those who judged the situation with Marxian realism. Side by side with national antagonism, class antagonism developed during the post-war period of the Indian Nationalist Movement. Gradually the latter antagonism became predominant over the former. The process of class differentiation inside the Nationalist ranks caused constant political regrouping. The predominating tendency was towards the formation of a bourgeois bloc of constitutional opposition. Imperialism helped this tendency very cleverly and successfully with the policy of 'Economic Concession and Political Repression'—economic concession to Indian capitalism to draw the Nationalist bourgeoisie closer to the British Government, thus isolàting the middle-class Nationalists, whose comparatively radical political activities were dealt with by the firm hand of repressive laws. The move to the Right—towards compromise with imperialism—was marked by two very distinct stages: first, divorce of the bourgeois Nationalist movement from the most revolutionary social forces—workers and peasants; second, the schism between the big bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. The first was accomplished in 1923 when the revolutionary programme of mass passive resistance to imperialist autocracy was abandoned in favour of constitutional parliamentary obstruction. The organization of the Swaraj Party marked the separation of the Nationalist movement from revolutionary mass action.

By the end of 1925 the schism between the big bourgoisie and the petty bourgeoisie became wide enough to split the Swaraj Party, which for two years had served the purpose of a bridge between the constitutionalism of the big bourgeoisie and the revolutionary inclinations of the petty bourgeoisie.*

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* Since this was written, the defection of the Mahratta Responsivists has culminated in a complete split of the Swaraj Party on the lines of class interests of the big bourgeoisie and of the lower middle class.

The split in the Swaraj Party means the burning of that bridge. The big bourgeoisie have decided to shake off the encumbrance of the petty bourgeois political vagaries, notwithstanding the fact that the latter have served their purpose. The split in the Swaraj Party removes the last obstacle to a happy compromise between the Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism, of course under the hegemony of the latter.

The desire for this compromise is not one-sided. British imperialism is very desirous of stabilizing the economic and political situation in India. It has long been recognized by far-seeing imperialist statesmen that a country like India cannot be kept long in subjugation without the active and willing support of an influential section of the native population. In other words, imperialism must have a social basis in India. Until the earlier years of the twentieth century, British imperialism in India relied upon two native factors: one positive, the other negative. The first was the loyalty of the reactionary landed aristocracy which had been partly created and partly bolstered up by the British conquerors. The second was the passivity of the masses. Relying on these two factors, British imperialism could afford to ignore the feeble demands of the rising bourgeoisie and the revolutionary dissatisfaction growing among the petty intellectuals. Besides, until the World War, the economics of imperialism demanded that India (as well as other colonial countries) should be held in a state of industrial backwardness in order to supply a market and raw materials for the metropolitan industries. Consequently, the relation between imperialism and the colonial bourgeoisie was that of antagonism. This antagonism found its expression in the Nationalist movement. But there was another economic consideration which made the Nationalism of the Indian bourgeoisie weak and compromising even in those days. Owing to the forced industrial backwardness of the country, the Indian bourgeoisie were mostly engaged in distributing trade which was dependent on British imperialism both politically and economically. Politically, because security and expansion of trade required a stable government and order in the country, conditions which had been fulfilled by the British. Economically, because both the export and import trade being practically a British monopoly, the Indians engaged in it were economic vassals of imperialism. The Nationalist movement inspired and headed by such a weak social class did not disturb imperialism. The terrorist secret societies, through which the growing discontent of the unemployed and unemployable petty intellectuals was spasmodically expressed, could be dealt with successfully by brutal repression.

The situation remained more or less like this till the eve of the World War. Soon after the outbreak of the world conflagration, it became evident that British domination in India could no longer be maintained on the old narrow social basis. The social basis of British rule could be widened and deepened only by drawing at least the upper strata of the Nationalist bourgeoisie within the economic orbit of imperialism. This necessitated a change in the economic policy of imperialism. Still another factor contributed to that change, and precipitated it. The exigencies of war obliged Britain to relax her grip on the economic life of India. Thus began the new era when imperialist interests were so changed as to render an agreement with the Indian bourgeoisie desirable and profitable.

CHAPTER TWO

Dividing the Spoils

All along, the grievance of the Indian bourgeoisie had been that the British Government impeded the industrial development of India. The two main planks of the Nationalist platform were fiscal autonomy and administrative reforms. The demand for fiscal autonomy grew energetic in proportion to the accumulation of capital in the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie. The phenomenal growth of British trade with India had unavoidably caused a proportionate accumulation of capital in the hands of the Indian mercantile class connected with that prosperous trade. The following table shows that growth of India's foreign trade in the 40 years preceding the World War which caused a revolution in Britain's economic relations with India:

Foreign Trade
(*In millions of rupees*)

Quinquennial Average	Export	Import	Excess Export
1874–79	630	380	250
1879–84	790	590	200
1884–89	880	610	270
1889–94	1,040	710	330
1894–99	1,070	740	330
1899–04	1,220	850	370
1904–09	1,440	1,030	410
Annual			
1909–10	1,880	1,220	660
1910–11	2,090	1,330	760
1911–12	2,280	1,440	840
1912–13	2,460	1,660	800
1913–14	2,490	1,910	580

It will be noticed that the characteristic of this large volume of trade has always been a considerable excess of export over import. In countries in a normal economic (capitalist) condition, such a continual favourable balance of trade indicates a state of 'national prosperity'. But in India it was not the case. 'National wealth' does not belong to the nation. It is the property of that social class which controls the economic life of the nation. The economic life of India not being controlled by the native bourgeoisie, the accumulated wealth produced by the people (workers and peasants) did not contribute to the capitalist development of the country.

The portion of the commodities exported, that was not covered by imports, did not go to create credit in favour of India. The surplus Indian export represented mostly the tribute to imperialism; nevertheless, a part was appropriated by the native trading bourgeoisie in a manner to be explained presently.

Even now nearly 70 per cent of India's export are raw materials and foodstuff. During the period covered by the above table the proportion was still greater. By far the largest portion of the raw materials exported were produced by the small peasantry, there being very little large-scale farming in India, except the tea plantations. The unpaid excess export, therefore, indicated a terrible exploitation of the peasantry. Imports were and still are mostly manufactured goods. The comparative smallness of their volume shows the corresponding limitedness of the buying capacity of the Indian masses. The latter produced and were obliged to give up much more than they could get in return. The proceeds of the exploitation of the Indian peasantry, reflected in the trade balance in favour of India, were divided between British imperialism and Indian traders. A portion of the surplus exports was paid up by the import of gold and silver which was mostly absorbed by the upper classes of Indian society. The remaining portion went to the account of liquidating Indian obligations to England for the benefit of British rule.

The following table shows how the value of excess export was divided up till the war:

Division of Excess Export Value
(*In millions of rupees*)

Quinquennial Average	Excess Export	Treasure Imported*	To Liquidate Obligations†
1874–79	250	100	150
1879–84	200	120	80
1884–89	270	130	140
1889–94	330	140	190
1894–99	330	80	250
1899–04	370	140	230
1904–09	410	220	190

* The item treasure is practically all covered by gold and silver bullion, apart from that imported by the Government for coinage.

† India's obligations in Britain consist of pensions for the retired English civil and military officials, payment for the Government stores and supplies, and interest and sinking fund for the debts floated in the English market on behalf of the Government of India. India's public debt in Britain amounts to about 450 million sterling, the annual recurring charges for interest and sinking fund being about 20 million sterling at present.

Annual			
1909–10	660	310	350
1910–11	760	320	440
1911–12	840	490	350
1912–13	800	510	290
1913–14	580	370	210

These tables are compiled from the figures in the Government Statistical Abstract. Round numbers approximating the exact value are used.

Thus the portion of the surplus value extracted from the Indian masses only through the unpaid amount of raw produce exported, during the period 1874–1914, in terms of money amounted to 14,440 million rupees, of which 6,650 million fell to the share of the Indian bourgeoisie. This wealth could not be converted into capital sufficiently profitably by investment in land and trade—two main avenues of exploitation open to the Indian bourgeoisie. The search for a more lucrative industrial outlet became ever more persistent and crystallized in the Nationalist demand for protection to native industry and fiscal autonomy. Nationalist economists complained bitterly against the 'drain' of wealth from India, because the major portion of the surplus value produced by the masses of the population was misappropriated by foreign capitalists. According to the theory of bourgeois economics, the entire booty belonged legitimately to the native possessing classes. In that case, it would represent 'national wealth' indicating prosperity of the nation, although its source just the same would be the exploitation of the producing classes. The complaint was not against the system that took away from the peasantry and other producing classes 14,440 crores of rupees in 40 years without giving anything in return. The complaint was that the entire or major part of the sum did not go into the pockets of the native bourgeoisie, and that what did fall to the share of the native bourgeoisie might be more profitably invested. Development of Indian capitalism was obstructed in the interest of British imperialism.

The programme of Nationalism as expressed by the National Congress was not based upon the irreconcilable antagonism between the foreign exploiter and the robbed Indian masses. It represented a feeble protest against the 'unfair' distribution of the booty. It is remarkable—and therein lay the germ of subsequent compromise with imperialism—that the political plank of the Nationalist platform was not half as strong as the economic one of fiscal autonomy.

What is meant by fiscal autonomy? It means that India should be autonomous (of Britain) in her financial and trade operations. It is evident that the autonomy in financial and commercial spheres cannot be effective without a simultaneous political autonomy. So long as Britain remains the dominating political force—the State power—in India, she will not permit the Indian bourgeoisie to readjust the financial and trade relations in a way harmful to British interest. But significantly enough, the Nationalism of the Indian bourgeoisie never demanded political freedom—it does not do so even now.

By fiscal autonomy the Indian bourgeoisie meant a wider latitude to exploit Indian labour by converting their accumulated wealth into industrial capital. However, in course of time, they realized the impossibility of winning even that much economic freedom without some political power. In 1916, as condition for India's full support to Britain in carrying on the war to victory, the Nationalist bourgeoisie demanded self-government (within the Empire)) and an immediate grant of fiscal autonomy. Imperialism could no longer remain indifferent to that demand made in a very critical moment. The first step towards agreement was taken, to be followed by others in quick succession.

CHAPTER THREE

The New Economic Policy of Imperialism

The demands of the Indian bourgeoisie coincided and even had been preceded by additional and unexpected events giving rise among the imperialist statesmen to a tendency towards an agreement with the Indian bourgeoisie even before the latter definitely formulated their attitude in 1916. The then Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, in a despatch to the Secretary of State for India, in the latter part of 1915, had recommended the policy of fostering the industrial growth of India. He said:

> 'It is becoming increasingly clear that a definite and self-conscious policy of improving the industrial capabilities of India will have to be pursued after the war, unless she is to become more and more a dumping ground for the manufactures of other nations. . . The attitude of the Indian public towards this important question is unanimous, and cannot be left out of account. . . After the war, India will consider herself entitled to demand the utmost help which her government can afford to enable her to take her place, so far as circumstances permit, as a manufacturing country'. (Lord Hardinge's despatch to the Secretary of State for India, in 1915.)

Acting on this recommendation of the Viceroy and in order to meet the demands of the Nationalist bourgeoisie, the British Government set up the Indian Industrial Commission 'to examine and report upon the possibilities of further industrial development in India'. A Nationalist leader and three foremost Indian capitalists sat on the Commission with representatives of imperialism. After two years of exhaustive investigation into the sources of capital, raw material, market and labour, the Commission recommended among other subsidiary things:

1. That in future the Government must play an active part in the industrial development of the country.
2. That India produces all the raw materials necessary for the requirements of a modern community, but is unable to manufacture many of the articles and materials essential alike in times of peace and war. Therefore, it is vital for the Government to ensure the establishment in India of those industries whose absence exposes us to grave danger in the event of war.

3. That modern methods should be introduced in agriculture so that labour now wastefully employed would be set free for industries.
4. That the policy of 'laissez faire' in industrial affairs, to which the Government clung so long, should be abandoned.
5. That the establishment of Industrial Banks should be encouraged by means of Government financing, if necessary.
6. That the necessity for securing the economic safety of the country, and the inability of the people to secure it without the co-operation of the Government, are apparent. Therefore, the Government must adopt a policy of energetic intervention in industrial affairs.

While the Commission was still carrying on its investigation, practical effect was given to the recommendations that it made subsequently. In 1917, the Indian Munitions Board was created 'to develop Indian resources to meet the necessities of war and the situation created by the war'. The (English) Chairman of the Industrial Commission, who had always been an advocate of the point of view that industrial development of India would strengthen the basis of imperialism, became the head of that newly created State organ which gave a tremendous impetus to Indian industry. The Munitions Board worked on the following lines:

1. Direct purchase in India of articles and materials of all kinds needed for the army, the civil departments and railways.
2. The diversion of all orders for articles and materials from the United Kingdom and elsewhere to the manufacturers in India.
3. The giving of assistance to individuals and firms in order to stabilize new industries or develop old ones.

The result was reflected in the increased share of manufactured articles in export trade from 24 per cent to 31 per cent, reached in two years. Moreover, orders for large transport and military supplies were placed with Indian manufacturers who were given State aid to fulfil the orders. The growth of the Tata Iron and Steel Company is indicative of the situation in general.

The Tata Iron and Steel Company Production
(*In tons.*)

Year	Pig Iron	Steel	Steel Rails
1915	154,509	66,603	45,639
1917	167,870	114,027	7[illegible],670
1918	198,064	130,043	71,096
1919	232,368	134,061	70,969

The net profit was as follows:

1915	2,805,000	rupees
1916	5,103,000	”
1917	7,927,500	”
1918	7,900,000	”

The next step towards agreement was the scheme of constitutional reforms prepared jointly by the Secretary of State for India, Montague, and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. They proposed to give the Indian bourgeoisie and higher professional classes a share in the legislative and administrative authority of the country. The main features of the Reforms were: (1) modification of the control of the Indian Government by the British Parliament; (2) creation of central and provincial legislatures with an elected majority; (3) extension of the franchise to include the entire bourgeoisie and the upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie; (4) increase of the number of Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council (and appointment of Indian Ministers to the Provincial Governors in addition to Executive Councillors, both English and Indian); (5) transfer of local self-government to the Indians; (6) opening of the higher positions in civil services to Indians, etc., etc.

These political reforms (essentially very inadequate), together with the recognition of the right of Indian capital, fully satisfied the upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie. Three years after the demand for full self-government (within the Empire) had been put forward by the united Nationalist Movement, the Moderate Party, representing the big industrialist and commercial classes, accepted in 1919 the very inadequate measure of self-government granted by the Government of India Act. Economic concessions made under the pressure of war exigencies satisfied them. The recommendations of the Industrial Commission and the steps taken for their fulfilment meant to the big bourgeoisie, represented by the Moderate Party, more than the reforms granted by the Government of India Act. The upper strata of the bourgeoisie not only broke away from the National Congress, but fully co-operated with the Government to suppress the post-war revolutionary movement.

On the economic aspect, the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme of Constitutional Reform expressed the following opinion:

> As the desirability of industrial expansion became clearer, the Government of India fully shared the desire of the Indian leaders to secure the economic advantages that would follow the local manufacture of raw products. English theories as to the appropriate limits of the State's activity are inapplicable to India. We believe that this is true in case of industries, and that if the resources of the country are to be developed, the Government must take action.

It is to be noted that the concessions made were not forced by the demand of the Indian bourgeoisie alone. The other factors of very great importance asserted themselves on the situation. They were (1) exigencies of the war, and (2) necessity of widening the social basis of imperialism. Still another factor came into play subsequently. That was the crisis of world capitalism caused by the war.

Towards the close of the World War, the negative factor—passivity of the masses—upon which British rule in India had mainly relied, almost disappeared. In spite of the maturing rapprochement between imperialism and the Nationalist bourgeoisie, the country was in a state of revolt. The necessity of widening and deepening the social basis of British rule in India by winning over the native bourgeoisie became imperative. The Reforms Act of 1919 was passed by the British Parliament to meet the situation. But the first great revolutionary expression of Indian Nationalism could not be altogether suffocated by an Act of Parliament. A few years of disturbances were to follow. The revolutionary upheaval of 1919–21, however, did not hinder the process of agreement. On the contrary, the fear of revolution drove the Indian bourgeoisie into the arms of capitalism.

The appearance of tremendous revolutionary forces on the scene encouraged the petty bourgeoisie, whose position would be scarcely improved by the reforms, to oppose the reforms. Even a section of the bourgeoisie joined that opposition. But the new imperialist policy of steady economic concession to the Indian bourgeoisie, in course of time, knocked the bottom out of the opposition which took the form of boycott of the reformed legislatures. It may once more be emphasized that the policy of concession was forced upon imperialism by two considerations entirely independent of the demand of the Indian bourgeoisie. They were (1) to enlist the services of the Nationalist bourgeoisie in the attempt to suppress the revolutionary uprising of the Indian masses for freedom, and (2) to overcome the post-war crisis of capitalism by creating new markets and tapping the sources of cheap labour.

As a further encouragement to the process of Indian industrialization, in December 1919, the Government moved a resolution in the Legislative Assembly, appointing a commission to give practical shape to the recommendations of the Indian Industrial Commission. The Resolution says:

> The most obvious and direct form of assistance which the Government can give to the industries of the country is by the purchase of supplies required for the public services so far as possible in the country itself.

This measure to advance the interests of native capitalism was taken immediately after the most powerful section of the Indian bourgeoisie had broken away from the Nationalist movement. It was obviously intended to show that it paid to cooperate with imperialism even on the basis of very inadequate political reforms. Besides, British capital invested or about to be invested in India, not as previously, but for building manufacturing industries, was influencing the economic policy of imperialism.

Referring to the cause and consequences of the establishment of the Indian Stores Department, the British Trade Commission in India wrote in 1920:

> In the first place, both the Indian and also the non-official European members of the Legislature are determined that, in future, all purchases of stores for Government requirements shall be made in India and that all tenders shall be called for in India and in rupees. These claims have been met by the Government of India to some extent. The revised Store Rules permit the newly organised Indian Stores Department at Delhi/Simla to purchase almost unlimited quantities from stocks held in India or in the course of shipment. They also sanction purchases of machinery and plant from the Indian branches of British manufacturers or from their technical agents. There seems to be little doubt that the new Indian Stores Department will rapidly increase in importance and that the centre of purchasing influence, so far as important stores are concerned, will be transferred from London to India.

Already in 1918, the Government had declared they would place an order for 3,000 railway wagons with Indian manufacturers annually for ten years, provided that the prices were not higher than the prices at which wagons could be imported from other countries. A contract was made with Tata Company for the supply of 10, 000 tons of steel plates annually for a period of ten years. The budget of 1922–23 allotted 1,500,000,000 rupees for the rehabilitation of the railways. On the motion of Sir Vithaldas Thakersey, a leading Indian industrialist and financier, the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution appointing a committee to investigate 'what steps should be taken by the Government of India to encourage the establishment of the necessary industries so that as large an amount as possible of the railway rehabilitation allotment be spent in India'.

CHAPTER FOUR

India Adopts Protection

In its report the Railway Committee cited instances of the failure of Indian manufacturers to compete successfully with the manufacturers of other countries. Consequently, the opinion of the Committee was 'that industries newly started in India for the manufacture of railway materials of a fabricated character cannot, in the initial stage, compete *without assistance* against established industries abroad'. As a logical consequence of this admission, the Legislative Assembly passed a Bill in June 1924, granting bounty on the manufacture of railway wagons in India until the year 1929.

All these measures were heading towards Protectionism—the *summum bonum* of Indian Nationalist demand. To the dissatisfaction of the Indian bourgeoisie, the Industrial Commission of 1916 had been precluded from touching the tariff question. Naturally, British imperialism had been very reluctant to equip the Indian bourgeoisie with a weapon that could eventually be turned against it. But events were moving fast. The decision to purchase railway material, structural steel, etc., manufactured in India when the amount manufactured could obviously not supply the demand, was an invitation for British capital to build industries in India. The concession to the Indian bourgeoisie was incidental. The process of accumulation of capital in the industries in Britain was on the decline; should British capital not find other sources of investment which could lead to accumulation setting off the decline at home, the post-war crisis of British imperialism would be decidedly fatal. Further, the Indian market was rapidly ceasing to be a British monopoly. It was invaded from all sides—United States, Japan, Germany and Belgium taking the lead. The following tables show the situation as regards the iron and steel trade:

Steel Imports

From	1914	1922
Britain	59.8 per cent	45.7 per cent of total import
Belgium	17.0 per cent	30.7 per cent " "
U.S.A.	2.2 per cent	13.7 per cent " "

Even Germany, which had been totally eliminated from the Indian market uptil 1920, recovered her position by 1922 to the extent of 12.1 per cent of the total import.

Imports of Iron Bars and Channels
(*In tons*)

	1920	1922
Britain	77,726	17,616
Germany	9,743	38,404
Belgium	39,580	113,116

The textile market, which had absorbed over 30 per cent of British export to India, was also seriously cut into by Japan. The following figures illustrate the situation:

Pounds of Yarn Imported

	Britain	Japan
1922–23	31,018,372	26,546,905
1923–24	24,789,923	20,430,025
1924–25	20,759,078	32,324,773

In the first quarter of 1925, Japanese import was 16,160,285 pounds as against 4,861,775 pounds from England. As regards woven goods, particularly of the finer varieties, Lancashire was still resisting the competition. But over 60 per cent of India's textile demands consist of cheap rough stuff, owing to the low standard of living of the people. Ever-increasing quantities of yarn of the lower counts, imported from Japan, would be woven in the Indian mills and drive the Lancashire cloth out of the Indian market. The consideration of this eventuality induced the Lancashire millowners, just recently, to come to an agreement with the Indian manufacturers by acquiescing in the abolition of the Excise Duty on the Indian cotton industry.

The greatest portion of the 1,500,000,000 rupees allotted (in 1921) for the rehabilitation of railways was spent in England but in the teeth of persistent Indian demand that supplies for Indian railways should be bought in the cheapest market. Eventually Indian orders would go to other countries by the sheer law of competition (the basic principle of capitalist economy), unless Britain permitted India herself to supply them.

British manufacturers were being dislodged approximately at the corresponding rate from other Eastern markets. To manufacture in India was the only possible way out of the impasse. Cheap labour and raw materials and great saving on the cost of transport taken together would enable the British capitalists not only to hold their own in the Eastern market; the enormous profit made might also enable them to tide over the industrial crisis at home.

Soon after the conclusion of the war, a number of iron and steel manufacturing companies were registered in India, all connected with British firms. The principal ones were:

1. Indian Iron and Steel Company, Ltd.; Capital Rs 5,000,000. Registered in 1918. Projected production 180,000 tons of pig iron a year. Promoted by Burn and Co., a British engineering and shipbuilding firm in India.
2. The United Steel Corporation of Asia, Ltd.; Capital, Rs 150,000,000. Registered in 1921. Projected annual production 300,000 tons of pig iron and 200,000 tons of finished steel to be increased in a few years to 700,000 and 450,000 tons respectively. Promoted by Cammel, Laird and Co., of Sheffield.
3. The Peninsula Locomotive Co., Capital Rs 6,000,000, held partly by Kerr, Stuart and Co., of Stoke-on-Trent, and partly by Indian capitalists. Will be able to produce 299 locomotives a year to begin with.

The lead given by these firms was sure to be followed by others. (It has been proved to be so by subsequent events.) Thus, tariff walls raised by the Indian Government would no longer operate against British interests. They would protect the Indian key industry largely promoted and owned by British capital, with native capital participating.

There was another reason which obliged British imperialism to accede to the Indian Nationalist demand for protection by a high tariff. This was a negation of the traditional policy on which British trade relations with India had always been determined. In the interest of the home manufacturers Britain imposed upon India the policy of Free Trade. In the case of India, Free Trade means free exploitation by British imperialism. The British manufacturers would not tolerate the least obstacle to be placed on the free import of their commodities to India.

Financial difficulties in the post-war years had obliged the Indian Government to raise import duties to a height which, for practical purposes, had protectionist effects. From an average 3 per cent ad valorem levied before the war for revenue purposes, the import duties had been raised from 11 to 15 per cent. Judged from this side, what remained to be done was to call the spade a spade—come out officially in favour of protection for India and thus satisfy the traditional demand of the Nationalist bourgeoisie.

In the beginning of 1921 the following resolution, moved by Lallubhai Samaldas (an Indian merchant and financier) was passed by the Legislative Assembly:

> This Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council that His Majesty's Government be addressed through the Secretary of State with a prayer that the Government of India be granted full fiscal autonomy subject to the provisions of the Government of India Act.

Immediately after this resolution had been passed the Secretary of State for India in replying to a deputation from Lancashire (which had all along been the sturdy opponent to India's fiscal freedom) declared the decision:

> To give to the Government of India the right to consider the interests of India first, just as we, without any complaint from any other parts of the Empire, and the other parts of the Empire without any complaint from us, have always chosen the tariff arrangements which they think best fitted for their needs, thinking of their own citizens first.

This speech was followed by a despatch, dated 30th June 1921, to the Government of India, announcing the decision of the British Government to accept the principle of fiscal autonomy.

In October 1921, was appointed a Fiscal Commission to examine the question of a tariff, under the Presidency of Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola—a great Bombay millowner. Out of the eleven members of the Commission, seven were Indians, all prominent in industrial, commercial and Nationalist political fields. One unprecedented feature of the Commission was that it had only one English official on it. The divergence between the interests of British and Indian capital had been so reduced that mutual confidence and joint action was possible.

The Fiscal Commission submitted its report at the end of the next year. Basing itself on the conclusions 'that the industrial development of India has not been commensurate with the size of the country, its population and its natural resources, and that a considerable development of Indian industries would be very much to the advantage of the country as a whole', the Commission recommended, among other things:

1. That the Government of India adopt a policy of Protection with discrimination.
2. That a permanent Tariff Board be set up to consider the claims of particular industries for protection.
3. That raw materials and machinery be admitted free of duty.
4. That the Excise Duty on the Indian cotton industry be removed.
5. That no obstacle be raised to the free inflow of foreign capital, but that Government monopolies or concessions be granted only to companies incorporated and registered in India with rupee capital, and with Indians on their directorates.

Five Indian members of the Commission (the President himself included among them) did not consider the verdict of the Commission wide enough and supplemented the General Report with a minute of dissent. The essence of their point of view will be interesting and useful to note, since it represents the demand of the most radical section of the Indian bourgeoisie. The dissenting minority wrote:

1. There should be an unqualified pronouncement that the fiscal policy best suited to India is *Protection*.
2. It is a mere commonplace to say that a rich India is a tower of strength to the Empire, while an economically weak India is a source of weakness. . . India would have been of far greater help to England during the war if the policy of protection had been adopted at least a generation ago . . . This (revision of the tariff policy) would have been to her great advantage and would have been beneficial to the Empire . . .

India, inhabited by a fifth of the human race, can be of tremendous value, economic and political, both to herself and to the Empire, if development proceeds on lines suited to her conditions.

On the question of inflow of foreign capital, the minority appeared to differ from the view expressed in the general report. But this is what they said:

> We are unanimous in thinking that in the interest not only of the consumer, but of the economic advancement of the country, it is essentially necessary that industrialisation should proceed at a rapid pace. . . We will, therefore, state at once, that we would raise no objection to foreign capital in India obtaining the benefit of protective policy, provided suitable conditions are laid down to safeguard the essential interests of India.'

The conditions recommended by the minority, however, are the same as stated in the general report, namely: incorporation of companies in India with rupee capital and proportionate Indian directors.

In February 1923, the Government of India declared the acceptance of the principle of discriminating protection recommended by the Fiscal Commission as a whole. The Government resolution unanimoulsy adopted by the Legislative Assembly accepted 'in principle the proposition that the fiscal policy of the Government of India may legitimately be directed towards fostering the development of industries in India.'

A few months later, acting upon the recommendations of the Fiscal Commission, the Government appointed the Tariff Board consisting of three members, two of whom were Indians. Thus an agreement was reached between the Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism on the vital question of economic antagonism. Without vitally injuring imperialist monopoly, considerable satisfaction was given to Indian capitalism at the expense of the masses.

The Tariff Board began, of course, with the Iron and Steel industry. The Tatas immediately came forward with the demand for a 33.5 per cent duty on imported steel manufactures. On the recommendation of the Tariff Board, the Government in May 1924 brought before the Legislative Assembly the Steel Industry (Protection) Bill which set up a tariff varying from 20 to 25 per cent on fabricated iron and steel entering the country, and a large bounty on the production in India of railway wagons. The Bill authorized the Government to raise the duty in case one or more of the dutiable articles would be found to be imported into India at such a price as would be likely to render ineffective the protection intended. The Bill passed the Legislative Assembly with very little opposition. The Swaraj Party broke its vow of obstruction and voted with the Government.

The effect of protection on the Indian iron and steel industry can be judged from the following estimated growth in the production of the Tata concern behind a tariff wall. Total production in 1923 was 121,000 tons. It will increase to 250,000, 335,000 and 390,000 tons in the three succeeding years.

Hardly a year after the passage of the Protection Act, the Tatas declared that the duties did not give them enough protection and demanded their increase. The Government, with the sanction of the Assembly, granted the demand not by additional duty, but by a substantial bounty on production to guarantee a fixed margin of profit.

The Tariff Board then recommended protection for the paper and cement industries and is at present considering the claims of the coal-mining industry. Since the industries, whose claims are to be investigated, are suggested by the Government, the protection for these industries is a foregone conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Cotton Excise and Foreign Trade

The climax of the policy, which has transformed the economic relation between the Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism from antagonism to co-operation, was abolition of the 3.5 per cent Excise Duty; there has been a duty of 11 per cent on the cotton goods imported, which duty remains in force. One of the outstanding Nationalist grievances has always been 'the strangling of India's premier industry in the interest of Lancashire'. The phenomenal growth of the Indian cotton industry does not justify this grievance. The industry, with an aggregate capital of Rs 300,000,000 (in round numbers) made a total clear profit of Rs 350,000,000 in the period of three years, 1919–1921. Even when in September 1925, the workers (150,000) employed in the Bombay mills were locked out to enforce a further wage cut of 11.5 per cent (in addition to a 20 per cent cut in 1924) on the pretext of 'ruinous' trade depression, not less than half the mills were paying a fairly high rate of dividends. However, the abolition of the Excise Duty removed the last cause of friction between the Indian bourgeoisie and Imperialism. The political effect of this step had been to split the Nationalist movement along the line dividing the big bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. The life of the Swaraj Party, which stood with one foot in the camp of the big bourgeoisie and another in the petty bourgeois camp, is seriously threatened.

This concession again was not made in deference to the demands of the bourgeois Nationalists. Consideration of Britain's own economic interest was there, beside the subtle policy of politically isolating the petty bourgeois Nationalists by showing the Indian capitalists that their economic growth was not only possible, but even could be promoted within the orbit of Imperialist economy.

In spite of the enormous growth of native production, India still imports nearly 50 per cent of the textile requirements, which until recently used to be supplied by Lancashire. But in the last years things have changed greatly. Japan has been breaking into the Indian market with alarming rapidity. Her share in the Indian trade increased from 0.3 in 1914 to 9.1 per cent in 1924. In 1925 the proportion was expected to be much greater. England cannot possibly compete with Japanese goods produced by sweated labour.

Indian mills worked by coolie labour can alone do that; and the British bourgeoisie can always participate in the resulting profit by exporting capital to India to be invested in those mills. It is remarkable that before the abolition of the Excise Duty was declared, the President of the Bombay Millowners' Association, N. N. Wadia, visited England and had conferences with Lancashire millowners. In view of the stormy opposition of Lancashire when the duty on cotton goods imported into India was raised from 7.5 per cent to 11 per cent without a simultaneous increase in the Excise Duty, the gracious acquiescence of Lancashire in the abolition of the small Excise Duty without touching the comparatively high import duty is remarkable. The explanation of this changed attitude is provided by the following quotation from a statement issued by a joint meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Lancashire mill-owners convened immediately after the announcement abolishing the Excise Duty.

> If the industrial and general situation in India improves in the way in which it is so much desired, it is clear that the Lancashire industry may hope for better trade as a result. That there is a potential purchasing power in India sufficient to engage the producing power of both Indian and Lancashire industries, cannot be doubted. . . It is to be hoped that in the new situation now created we may find ourselves moving towards a position where the needs of the Indian market will be met to an increasing extent by her own manufacturers in their class of product, and by Lancashire in the types upon which she will naturally concentrate. Such a state of affairs would satisfy the legitimate aspirations of India, whilst not doing injustice to the Lancashire industry. If this situation frankly recognised by both parties, could lead to the fostering of a better spirit of mutual sympathy, support and accommodation, we would be prepared to accept any difficulties which may be imposed on Lancashire by the present decision in a generous manner—(*The Economist*, 5 December 1925.)

The situation is obvious: Indian and British capital made up their age-long quarrel and came to an agreement against the common foe, Japan. Referring to the abolition of the Excise Duty, *The Economist* (5 December 1925) wrote:

> The fact of the matter is that times have changed. India has now fiscal autonomy, and it is useless for Lancashire to make protests against reductions in Excise Duties or increase in Import Duties. It must not be forgotten that this action of the Indian Government will probably be a more serious matter for Japan than for this country. Lancashire realises more fully than ever that in the future she will have to concentrate her machinery more and more on the finer makes of cloth, and leave the coarser materials to be made by the mills in the East. During the last few years leading authorities have noticed a desire on the part of Indian consumers of cotton cloth to purchase higher quality goods. If this is maintained and extended as there

> is reason for thinking that it will be, if the purchasing power of the natives is increased, then cotton manufacturers in this country have nothing to fear. It is primarily desirable that a spirit of friendship and goodwill should exist between the people of this country and of India. (p. 939.)

The abolition of the Excise Duty made a tremendous impression in India. Though reluctant to say so openly, the Nationalists generally recognized it as an unmistakable sign of a 'change of heart' on the part of Britain; and a 'change of heart' was all that the Nationalists wanted as the price for their 'wholehearted and honourable co-operation' with the British Government on the basis of the reformed constitution.

Another very significant event was the appointment of a committee to investigate and recommend under what conditions foreign capital should be admitted into India. The report of the committee accepts all the conditions laid down by the minority of the Fiscal Commission. This means that in the immediate future industrialization of India will be carried on jointly by Indian and British capital.

It will be interesting to examine the considerations which induced British imperialism radically to change its economic policy in India, as a by-product of which change the aspirations of the native bourgeoisie have been to a great extent satisfied. The political consideration has already been mentioned. It is the recognition of the fact that the struggle for national freedom is no longer the political expression of the comparatively weak capitalist and intellectual classes. Its social basis has been enormously widened to include practically the entire population. Its objective programme has, therefore, changed from constitutional agitation for economic concession and administrative reform to—Revolution. The quarrel between imperialism and the native bourgeoisie was over the division of the surplus value produced by the Indian masses. It will pay imperialism to lessen its lion's share to tiger's share, rather than to risk the loss of everything. British imperialism acted according to the Hindu dictum—'Faced with total destruction, the wise forego half.'

An examination of the economic consideration will, however, show that it will not cost imperialism nearly as much to buy off the services of the Indian bourgeoisie and even the upper stratum of the middle classes, as against the revolutionary danger coming from the masses. As a matter of fact, it will cost nothing.

The interest of British capitalism demands not only a guarding of the Indian market against Japanese and American aggression; a continual extension of the market is also demanded. Markets must be found—created—for the British manufactures consumed in Central and Eastern Europe before the war. India offers great possibilities in that direction. But the economic ruin of the Central European countries greatly reduced the purchasing power of India because the greater part of Indian export used to be taken by those countries. That means, just at the moment when British capitalism wants a bigger market in India, there is a shrinkage in the Indian market. In spite of a rise in the value of the total foreign trade of India (Rs 5,890,000,000 in 1923–24), the volume was 28 per cent less than in 1914. The reason of this shrinkage is this. While on the average 60 per cent of India's imports come from Britain, about 60 per cent of her exports go to countries outside the British Empire. Since the war most of the European countries, that used to consume such a large portion of Indian exports, bought much less. The situation is illustrated by the following table:

Total Amount of Exports to		Rupees 1914	1922
Austria and Hungary	. . .	99,748,000	8,355,000
Belgium	. . .	120,648,000	80,032,000
France	. . .	176,827,000	98,270,000
Germany	. . .	263,558,000	162,777,000
Italy	. . .	78,351,000	58,378,000
Russia	. . .	24,542,000	35,000

Germany's share went down to as little as 13,859,000 in 1920.

This serious fall in her export trade naturally reflected upon India's ability to import, ultimately hurting the British manufacturers, since the major part of her import comes from Britain. All along, a large surplus of export over import represented the proceeds of imperialist exploitation, because the major portion of that surplus was absorbed to liquidate 'India's obligations in Britain'. In 1920 the balance of Indian trade (a balance artificially maintained in the interests of imperialism) was upset. Imports showed an enormous (890,000,000) excess over exports. Next year the disparity was reduced to 440,000,000 by a corresponding reduction in imports. The situation was extremely alarming for imperialism. There was a heavy deficit in the Budget. The representative of the Government of India, Charles Innes, informed the Imperial Economic Conference (London, 1923):

> Thanks to the war and disorganisation caused by the war, we sell less and, therefore, we buy less. This decrease of trade hits us in many ways.

Further on, the same speaker explained the new economic polity of the Government of India. He said:

> I am aware that it has caused some alarm in this country, but if, as we hope, the result of this policy (of protection) is to increase the wealth and productiveness of India, then, those who trade with India have nothing to

> fear. Already that trade is considerable in volume, but it is small in comparison with the size of the country and the population. In India we have 315 millions of the people—roughly one-fifth of the human race, and if only we can raise the standard of living of these millions and increase their capacity to consume goods, India's potentialities as a factor in international trade and as a market are almost limitless.

In the new state of world economy, it has become impossible for the British capitalists to extract tribute from India in the shape of a large unpaid surplus of export over import. The greater part of the foreign market for Indian produce of raw material has been ruined almost beyond repair. Therefore, imperialist plunder must find a different expression. To arrest the shrinkage of British trade with India, caused by the reduction in the latter's export trade, her purchasing power should be otherwise increased. This can be done by raising the standard of living of the Indian people. The standard of living of the Indian people, again, cannot be raised unless the choking grip on her economic life is considerably loosened. On the other hand, since a sufficient market for Indian raw produce cannot be found abroad, it must be created inside the country. This again must lead to industrialization. Industrialization of a country with such enormous resources of raw material, cheap labour and potentially unlimited markets, in its turn will open up for British capital new fields guaranteeing the possibility of almost fabulous accumulation. British capital invested in India will at the same time extend the market for the production of home industries.

These are, then, the fundamental considerations which induced British imperialism to adopt a new colonial policy permitting the growth of Indian capitalism within certain limits.

To sum up, since 1916 the British Government has introduced a series of economic measures that are greatly beneficial to the Indian bourgeoisie. Consequently, the antagonism between imperialism and Indian capitalism has been, at least for the time being, almost eliminated. The political result of this changed economic relation has been reflected in a steady decline of the Nationalist demand, and a pitiable bankruptcy of the mainly petty bourgeois Swaraj Party, whose programme reflected purely capitalist interests.

What are the cardinal demands of the Nationalist bourgeoisie? Impetus to the industrialization of the country; fiscal autonomy; protection. All these have been realized incidentally, in consequence of the attempts of British capitalism to overcome the serious post-war crisis by means of a re-adjustment of the economic basis of the Empire. The demand for self-government was put forward on the hypothesis that unless the native bourgeoisie possessed some political power, the programme of the free development of Indian capitalism could not be realized. Now it is demonstrated in practice that the economic programe of bourgeois Nationalism can be realized, in spite of the imperialist opposition to a rapid political change demanded by the petty bourgeoisie. In other words, the bourgeoisie have been convinced that their economic development is possible within the framework of imperialism.

PART II

THE POLITICS OF COMPROMISE

CHAPTER SIX

The Rise of The Swaraj Party

The future of Indian politics will be determined by the new economic situation. As a matter of fact, the Nationalist movement during the last five years has been greatly influenced by the changing economic relations between imperialism and the native bourgeoisie. Successive concessions to Indian capitalism have, since 1921, coincided with a steady decline in the Nationalist political demand. This process has caused a regrouping of forces on the basis of a class differentiation inside the Nationalist ranks. This process of class differentiation inside the Nationalist movement reached a climax in the split of the Swaraj Party. For three years the Swaraj Party maintained a formal relation between the bourgeoisie and the people as a whole by making the interests of native capital the basis of its 'national demand'. Now that the rapprochement with imperialism is practically complete, the bourgeoisie do not need the superficial political radicalism of the middle class intellectuals. Therefore, the Right Wing of the Swaraj Party, which consciously represents capitalist interests, declares in favour of political peace and breaks away to join the Liberal ranks. The majority of the Swaraj Party, which loudly reiterate their determination to keep up the parliamentary opposition, have gradually tempered their political demands to small measures of administrative reform. Only the question of prestige stands in the way. The Swaraj Party is naturally anxious to save its face, while imperialism demands unconditional surrender.

Eventually, after some oratorical explosions to cover the retreat, the middle class of the Swaraj Party will follow the Right Wing to the camp of a united constitutional bourgeois opposition.* There is no essential difference between 'honourable co-operation' and 'responsive co-operation', their respective slogans. Both are agreed on principle that co-operation with the British Government is the best practical policy. The question is how soon and on what condition the co-operation will be offered. The split in the Swaraj Party, therefore, is more likely to be between the Right and the Centre as against the petty bourgeois Left than as it appears now, between the Right and the rest of the party.†

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* Since this was written, in the beginning of 1926, the Swarajist leader Pundit Motilal Nehru signed the pact with the Responsivists declaring in favour of accepting Ministerial office. The Party refused to ratify the pact. Thus the breakaway of the Responsivists became an accomplished fact and a new schism became noticeable inside the majority.

The result of this impending split will be the conclusive detachment of the bourgeoisie from the anti-imperialist struggle. Another consequence of the split in the Swaraj Party will be the political unemployment, so to say, of the lower middle class intellectuals and the politically conscious section of the petty bourgeoisie.

Ever since the breakdown of the movement of mass passive resistance, thanks to the counter-revolutionary leadership of Gandhi and his followers, the Swaraj Party became the vanguard of the Nationalist movement. A review of its career, therefore, will help us to make a correct estimate of the situation. It will show how bourgeois Nationalism had been steadily declining until it touched the bottom.

The rise of the Swaraj Party in 1923 indicated a move to the Right. Those elements of the National Congress which had all along been opposed to the boycott of reforms and were against committing the Nationalist movement to revolutionary mass action, were the organizers of the Swaraj Party. The programme of the Swaraj Party brought the Nationalist movement back on its bourgeois (and even feudal) basis which had been somewhat lost sight of in the hectic days of 1920–21. The Swaraj Party replaced revolutionary mass action by parliamentary obstruction as the tactics of Nationalist politics.

The founder and leader of the Swaraj Party, Chittaranjan Das, in the beginning sentimentally talked about the downtrodden 98 per cent of the population and denounced the desire to replace the White bureaucracy by a Brown bureaucracy. It sounded very revolutionary and attracted the petty bourgeois Nationalists, who had been thrown into confusion by the counter-revolutionary political antics of Gandhi, under the flag of the Swaraj Party. The inherent contradiction of the programme of guarding the interests of the exploited 98 per cent through the instrumentality of Legislatures elected by the exploiting 2 per cent of the population, was not noticed in the midst of excitement. The programme of the Swaraj Party was to abandon the boycott of the pseudo-parliaments set up by the Reforms, in favour of entering them in order, as the Swarajist leader ostentatiously proclaimed, 'to give battle to the enemy from closer quarters'. The hypocrisy of the whole programme was, however, evident from the beginning to those who were not blinded by clouds of phrases. The Reforms Act had enfranchised hardly 2 per cent of the population. For the Central Legislature the franchise was still more limited. On the whole, the franchise did not go beyond the landowning classes, upper intellectuals and rich peasantry. It was to these classes that the Swarajist candidates appealed. This being the case, they could not possibly expect to be returned as the champion of the downtrodden, exploited, unfranchised 98 per cent. The enfranchised 2 per cent live and thrive at the expense of the unfranchised 98 per cent. It is worse than Utopia to believe that the propertied classes would vote for candidates who showed the slightest desire to tamper with the right of vested interests. Since the Swaraj Party wanted to secure for its parliamentary candidates the votes of the landowning and capitalist classes, its programme could not possibly contain anything more than the demands of those classes.

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† The rejection by the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Ahmedabad, on 5 May 1926, of the Sabarmati Pact in favour of accepting office, indicates that the line of differentiation inside the Swaraj Party does not lie between the Responsivists and the orthodox majority. If the rank and file assert themselves, the bluff of the present orthodox leadership will be called, and before long Motilal Nehru may be found crossing the Rubicon with his retinue.

The pioneers of the Swaraj Party appeared before the National Congress at Gaya (1922) with the demand for a change in the Nationalist programme. The sudden suspension of all militant activities ordered by Gandhi (with the approval of other Nationalist leaders including the would-be Swarajists) had thrown the National Congress into a state of confusion. The Nationalist movement was in a serious crisis when the Congress met at Gaya. The deadlock could be broken only by the adoption of a new programme. At that juncture the Communists put forward a programme of revolutionary Nationalism. The principal points of that programme were:

1. Complete National Independence; Separation from the British Empire.
2. Establishment of Democratic Republic based upon Universal Suffrage.
3. Abolition of Landlordism.
4. Reduction of land rent and indirect taxation; higher incidence of graduated Income Tax.
5. Modernization of agriculture with State aid.
6. Nationalization of Public Utilities.
7. Industrialization of the country with State aid.
8. Eight-hour day and minimum wage.

Had C. R. Das, who was the President of the Gaya Congress, been sincere in his previous pronouncement, that he stood for 'Swaraj for the 98 per cent', such a programme should have enlisted his support. But the programme proposed by the Communists was not even discussed in the Congress, although it was the dominating topic of the press for two weeks. The Nationalist press joined the imperialist papers in denouncing the programme as 'Bolshevist'.

In that crisis there were two ways before the Nationalist movement—either to break away from the deadening grip of counter-revolutionary pacifism in order to go ahead boldly in the revolutionary path; or to repent the involuntary revolutionary deviation of the preceding two years and return to the good old constitutionalism. The Swaraj Party appeared on the scene as the pioneer in the second path. Immediately after the inauguration of the Swaraj Party, the Communists, in an open letter to C. R. Das, again pointed out that there was no middle course between revolution and compromise with imperialism. It was also predicted in the same open letter that owing to the existence in its ranks of the mutually exclusive tendencies of compromising constitutionalism and revolutionary Nationalism, the Swaraj Party would split before long.

The Open Letter to C. R. Das concluded as follows: 'But in reality, the Deshbandhu with his revolutionary following again finds himself in the minority, because the majority of the new party (Swaraj), which appears to be formed under his leadership, subscribes much less to the socio-political views of Mr Das than do the die-hards of the 'no-change' cult, who remain in control of the Congress machinery. The result of such a combination can and will be either that Mr Das will soon have to abandon his original position in favour of 'Responsive Cooperation' of the Mahratta Nationalists or that he will have to part company with them in order to organize the third party inside the National Congress—the Party which reflects clearly the interests of the uncompromising revolutionary elements of our society, and which will infuse vigour into the national struggle by means of revolutionary mass action.

'This equivocal position will be cleared by a second split in the Congress camp. To force this inevitable separation of the revolutionary forces from the embrace of the Right Wing, which will bring the Congress back practically under the influence of Liberalism, is the task before you. Only by breaking away from the Right Wing, which in the name of Nationalism has repudiated the tactics of militant non-cooperation, your Party (Swaraj) will stand out as the vanguard of the National Army.'

This warning, given in February 1923, proved to be prophetic. Das went back on his own words.

Notwithstanding the sentimental utterances of its founder, the Swaraj Party became the party of the bourgeoisie—the Left Wing of bourgeois Nationalism. This aspect of its character was made clear in its programme and election manifesto. In the programme, Swaraj (self-government) was interpreted as 'an effective control of the existing machinery and system of Government and the right to frame a Constitution'. It is to be noted that the same people, who but two years ago had rejected the reforms as inadequate, were prepared to accept the 'machinery and system of government' set up by the reforms only on the condition that they could have 'an effective control' on them. What would be considered 'effective control' was open to discussion. Another point in the programme was 'to protect private and individual property, and to foster the growth of individual wealth'. This should be the cardinal point in the programme of a party that sought the vote of the propertied classes. The attitude of the party toward the landed aristocracy was remarkable. The following was contained in the election manifesto which was an *exposé* of the Party programme.

> 'It is to be noted with regret that the tongue of slander has of late been more than usually busy to estrange them (landowners) from the Swaraj Party. The Swarajya which the Party aims at is represented as something which has no place whatever for this ancient order, the members of which have in the past furnished many a brilliant chapter to the history of the country, and even in these degenerate days a number of ardent Nationalists among them. The Party can only appeal to these latter to set at rest the doubts and misgivings of their less enlightened brethren by explaining to them the obvious fact that those who desire to help in the building up of Swarajya cannot possibly dream of such madness as to undermine the very foundations of society as it has existed for hundreds of years in India by trying to eliminate an important and influential class from it. True it is that the Party stands for justice to the tenant, but poor indeed will be the quality of that justice if it involves any injustice to the landlord.'

Still more: C. R. Das himself had to repudiate his own irresponsible previous statement as regards the social affiliation of the Swaraj Party, in order to win the confidence of the landowning classes. In reply to the Secretary of the Behar Panchayet (village union) Association, he wrote:

> 'I do not desire any friction between landlords and tenants. I have opposed the idea of such class war from public platforms. The question of the repeal of the Permanent Settlement is an undesirable question to raise and, in my opinion, whatever steps are taken must be taken after the attainment of self-government and, even then, only as a matter of agreement between the landlords and the tenants.'

There could not be any doubt about the social affiliation of the Swaraj Party. By making itself the rather noisy spokesman of interests that had been reconciled to imperialist domination, the Swaraj Party launched upon a life of 'bluff and bluster' (to borrow the phrase of a Liberal Nationalist journal) which was bound to be short. The fact that the Swarajists failed to get a majority of the parliamentary seats (on the whole, less than 30 per cent of the total elected seats in the central and 8 provincial legislatures) shows that the big landlords and the upper strata of the bourgeoisie did not welcome the voluntary services of the new party. Being essentially a somewhat radical expression of bourgeois Nationalism, the Swaraj Party was obliged to moderate its already sufficiently moderate political demand to keep pace with the economic rapprochement between native capitalism and imperialism. Its very social orientation had imposed upon the Swaraj Party the inevitable necessity of this political climb-down.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Fiasco of the National Demand

Immediately after entering the Legislative Assembly, the Swaraj Party turned back on the original 'National Demand' which was for immediate self-government. The 'National Demand' was watered down to win the approbation of the moderate bourgeois parties. The resolution finally moved was:

> 'This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council that he be pleased to take at a very early date the necessary steps (including, if necessary, procuring the appointment of a Royal Commission) for revising the Government of India Act so as to secure for India a full self-governing Dominion status within the British Empire and Provincial Autonomy in the Provinces.'

There was no 'ultimatum' in this resolution as boastingly promised by the Swarajists during the election campaign nearly two months before. In fact, the demand was quite within the sphere of the 1919 Reform, which provides for further advance after a period not exceeding ten years. The original Swarajist programme was to adopt the policy of 'uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction to make government through Assembly and Councils impossible', if the Government rejected the Nationalist ultimatum. But in pledging their support to the moderated 'National Demand', the Right Nationalist parties stipulated that obstruction should never be launched unless it was agreed to by three-fourths of the combined membership of the Nationalist Party (a parliamentary coalition of the Swarajists and Independents). This agreement meant another long step backwards.

The dissatisfaction with the clumsiness of the administrative machinery set up by the Reforms and the demand for their early readjustment were prevalent among all the three Nationalist parties namely, Liberals, Independents and Swarajists. The latter's attitude differed in that they challenged the preamble of the Government of India Act, which made the British Parliament the judge of the time and manner of India's progress towards self-government. This radicalism, however, was soon abandoned in practice. An amendment was moved by the Swarajist leader to the joint Nationalist resolution. The support of all the elected Nationalist members had been assured for the Amendment which was:

> 'That the following be substituted for the original resolution. This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in Council to take steps to have the Government of India Act revised with a view to establish a full responsible government in India and for the purpose (a) to summon at an early date a representative round table conference to recommend with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities the scheme of a constitution for India, and (b) after dissolving the central legislature to place the said scheme before the newly-elected Indian Legislature for its approval and submit the same to the British Parliament to be embodied in a statute.'

This means, the Swaraj Party recognized the British Parliament as the final arbiter as regards India's rights to self-government. Essentially, the amendment was more moderate than the resolution. The latter demanded self-government within the Empire; while the former asked for 'full responsible government'. The reform demanded in the resolution was qualitative: India's political status should be improved from a dependency ruled autocratically to a self-governing Dominion. The amendment, on the contrary, asked for a mere quantitative change: the present partially responsible government to be replaced by 'full responsible government'. That is, if made fully responsible to the Legislative Assembly, the British Viceroy and British officials could remain as the rulers of the country. What was essentially wanted was that Britain should rule India with the sanction and collaboration of the native bourgeoisie (the Legislature does not represent any other class). Obviously by secret agreement among the Nationalist parties, the more far-reaching resolution was withdrawn in favour of the weaker amendment which was passed by a majority vote.

The debate revealed still more interesting and significant things. The Swarajist leader, Motilal Nehru, who had loudly informed his trusting petty bourgeois followers that the Swaraj Party was entering the reformed councils to 'non-cooperate from close quarters—to carry the war inside the enemy's camp', speaking in support of his amendment, dramatically declared: 'I am not asking for responsible government to be handed over, as it were, tied up in a bundle. We (Swarajists) have come here to offer our cooperation. If the Government will receive this cooperation, they will find that we are their men'. He concluded his speech by saying that the offer made by the Nationalists should not be thrown away, 'for no good is done by a continuance of the circumstances in which a section of the community is standing outside the Constitution'. In other words, the constitution (joint exploitation of the Indian masses by British imperialism and Indian Capitalism) by itself was not objectionable, only it did not make sufficient accommodation for the middle class, which as well as the bourgeoisie declared through the Swaraj Party—'Make a little more room and we will gladly come in'. From the very beginning, the Swaraj Party did not challenge imperialism, as it repeatedly trumpeted for the consumption of the revolutionarily inclined petty bourgeoisie. Its plan was to draw the government into a negotiation which might lead to a 'gentlemen's agreement'.

CHAPTER EIGHT

C. R. Das Climbs Down

The budget of 1924–25 came before the Legislative Assembly. Contrary to their repeated pledge to throw out the entire budget as a retaliation against the refusal to grant the national demand, the Swaraj Party only availed themselves of the opportunity for a dramatic political demonstration. The Right parties, frankly and consciously representing the big bourgeoisie, would not go very far with their Swarajist allies. As a formal demonstration, the Swarajists contented themselves with rejecting the first four heads of the revenue side of the budget with a slight majority. The bourgeoisie were already disapproving of the futile hysterics of their most energetic spokesmen—tactics which only prejudiced economic agreement and retarded political peace. In moving the rejection, Motilal Nehru again made some significant remarks. He said: 'My present motion has nothing to do with the wrecking or destroying policy of the non-cooperators; and is in effect a perfectly constitutional and legitimate means of drawing attention to the grievances of the country'. Mark well, 'constitutionally and legitimately drawing attention to grievances', and a few months after demanding immediate self-government as an ultimatum! Quite good progress; only in the wrong direction.

The Finance Bill was also thrown out by a still more diminished majority (of three). But in the course of the debate Motilal Nehru declared that 'the Nationalist Party, judging that they have established the principle for which they have contended, think it unnecessary to continue the same procedure with regard to subsequent demands'. The great bulk of the budget containing the vital items was voted by the Assembly. Evidently the Nationalist bourgeoisie had called a halt to their wayward champions. The budget was, of course, passed in its entirety by the Council of State, which also had an Indian majority but composed of 'sober and practical' men of business and administrative experience.

In the first session of the Assembly, the Swaraj Party scored a 'series of parliamentary victories' on subsidiary questions. These were trumpeted to serve the purpose of a smoke-screen over the continual retreat on vital points of the Nationalist front. In the official annual *Statement on Moral and Material Progress of 1923–24*, such complimentary comments were made on the behaviour of the Swarajists who, only a few months ago, had been looked upon and denounced as irresponsible trouble-makers.

> 'It is impossible to deny that the course they followed was in form constitutional . . . In their treatment of the budget as well as in their conduct during other episodes of the session, the Swarajists must be considered to have played the part of an accredited constitutional opposition (p. 281) . . . So far from indulging in the wholesale programme of obstruction and wreckage upon which they had at one time laid stress, they took a prominent part in the ordinary business of the House' (p. 281) . . .
>
> 'It exemplified the growing tendency towards strictly constitutional action on the part of the Swarajists.' (p. 287).

An extraordinary session of the Legislative Assembly convened in May 1924, to consider the Steel Industry (Protection) Bill, presented an amusing but significant scene. The Swarajists, who have posed as the spokesmen of the 'dumb millions' and declared their firm determination to obstruct all government measures, voted for an official legislation taxing the masses to gratify the greed of the Indian steel magnates. No less than five Swarajist members, including the leader, Motilal Nehru, and even the stormy petrel, V. J. Patel, accepted seats on the Select Committee to consider the Bill and thus willingly cooperated with the government. Patel brought in two mutually incompatible amendments, one ridiculous, the other going still further than the Bill in the advocacy of native capitalism. The first amendment recommended 'nationalization' of the protected steel industry. Nationalization of industry before the State was nationalized was simply a ridiculous idea. But the second amendment, in contradistinction to the first, was amazingly business-like. It recommended the application of protection only to those industries having at least two-thirds Indian capital. A clause was added to the government bill embodying the principle of the Patel Amendment and a Committee was appointed to report on conditions to be imposed upon the inflow of foreign capital. The demand for nationalization was, of course, dismissed without much ado. An amendment stipulating for a minimum wage in return for the advantage accruing from protection, failed to receive Swarajist support.

In August 1924, the leader of the Swaraj Party, C. R. Das, made a memorable statement to the press. The statement made by him marked a definite stage in the development of the Swarajist programme. He defined the demand of his party as follows:

> 'The first step should be autonomy in all the provinces, with some control in the central government, which at present might consist of a mixed British and Indian Council. But there should be some control in the Legislative Assembly, the extent of which could only be discussed at a round

> table conference . . . When a pact is concluded, as it must be soon, between Britain and India, defence arrangements would be part of the pact.'

The position could not be made clearer. It is to be remarked that 'effective control' of the existing administrative machinery demanded in the election manifesto is reduced to 'some control'; and the extent even of the 'some control' again remains open to negotiation. In making this statement the Swarajist leader acted as the spokesman, not of the entire Nationalist movement, as he pretended, but exclusively of the native bourgeoisie. The significance of this remarkable willingness for compromise on the part of the apparently most irreconcilable wing of the Nationalist ranks, lies in the fact that it was shown immediately after the fondest desire of native capitalism—protection for the Indian industries—had been actually conceded.

In view of this considerable climb-down as regards the essential political demands, the parliamentary fireworks in the subsequent session of the Legislature could not be taken seriously. They were meant to hoodwink the middle class adherents, whom the Swaraj Party was betraying in the interests of native capitalism.

C. R. Das concluded his statement with a declaration of faith and a warning to the Government. He said:

> 'I have been a truer friend of constitutional progress and more against the growing tendency towards anarchy than the Government will believe . . . There is a more serious anarchist movement in Bengal than the authorities realise. It is growing increasingly difficult to suppress it I hope Britain and India will get together presently and come to terms on the lines I have mentioned; for if the Swarajist movement fails, no repression can possibly cope with the anarchy that is sure to raise its head. Violence and disorder will reign supreme. The authorities do not realise that with the failure of the Swarajist movement, the people will lose all faith in any form of constitutional methods. When that happens, what is left to them but violent anarchical revolutionary methods?'

Taking his cue from the British police, the Swarajist leader called the revolutionary Nationalists 'anarchists'. He recognized that the economic ruin of the lower middle class, particularly petty intellectuals, had created an objective basis for revolutionary Nationalism, or what he was pleased to denounce as anarchism. As against this revolutionary danger he suggested a united front of British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie. The latter were no more a friend of 'anarchy' (that is, revolutionary Nationalism) than the former. Why not get together? The sooner the better. The Swarajist leader even gave a practical reason to convince the imperialist rulers who sometimes show a woeful lack of commonsense. He argued—if you strengthen our position by making some administrative readjustments, we will still be able to carry the lower middle class and petty intellectual revolutionaries in tow, taking advantage of their political immaturity.

The year 1925 began in an atmosphere surcharged with speculations as regards the possibility of the Swarajists accepting office provided that a few modifications were made in the system of dyarchy.* The question of the Swarajists' acceptance of Ministership arose only in two provinces—Bengal and the Central Provinces—where the Nationalists had a working majority and the Governor, to free the administration from recurring parliamentary crises, prorogued the Legislature *sine die*. The rest of the provinces, as well as the Central Government, were practically not affected by Swarajist obstruction. Consequently, in the beginning of 1925, the centre of Swarajist politics shifted from Delhi to Calcutta.

Towards the end of March, a number of Moslem Swarajists issued a statement to the press giving it to be understood that C. R. Das was willing to form a Ministry in Bengal Province. The Swarajist leader immediately issued a counter-manifesto in which he declared that he was 'willing to cooperate with the Government provided that the conditions were honourable'. In the course of the manifesto the Swarajist programme was once more specified in these words: 'We are determined to secure Swaraj and political equality for India on terms of equality and honourable partnership in the Empire'. Das passionately appealed to the European Community in India not to misunderstand or suspect the Swarajists.

Meanwhile, in the beginning of April 1925, the Tory Secretary of State for India, Birkenhead, made a speech on Indian conditions, sounding the possibility of an agreement. In a statement issued from Patna on 3 April, in relation to Birkenhead's speech, Das expressed his agreement with the Secretary of State that 'freedom would not be reached by violence', and pointed out the vigorous propaganda he had made against 'this standing menace to the establishment of Swaraj'. He reiterated that the only guarantee against revolution was an agreement with the Swarajists.

In his manifesto, the Swarajist leader admitted that 'a favourable atmosphere has been created for further discussion', but expressed his inability to go further ahead unless the Government met 'us more than half-way on the lines suggested by me'. What were those lines? 'Provincial autonomy with some control in the Central Government which at present might consist of the British Viceroy and a mixed British and Indian Council'.

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* A system of government introduced by the Reforms of 1919, under which the Provincial Administration was split into two parts—one in charge of Indian Ministers responsible to the Legislative Council to the extent that their salary is to be voted by the Legislature; the other in charge of Executive Councillors (Indian and English) independent of the Legislature and responsible only to the Governor.

The Nationalist bourgeoisie, whose interests the Swarajists had all along been defending, were also calling a halt. Only in the Central Provinces Legislature the Swarajists commanded an independent majority. The Nationalist majority in the Legislative Assembly and in the Bengal Council was based upon the coalition with the Independents. The coalition was breaking down. In the budget debate the Independents had not always voted with the Swarajists, thus sparing the Government further defeats. The Independent leader, Jinnah, on more than one occasion condemned the Swarajist tactics. He said: 'I repudiate the Swarajist claim that the policy of wrecking has the support of the majority of Indians'. It was a very ominous repudiation, since Jinnah's close relation with the financial and industrial magnates of Bombay is common knowledge.

After a rather prolonged secret negotiation between the Swarajist leader, Das, and the Governor of Bengal, Lytton, the former agreed to take the responsibility of forming a Nationalist Ministry on the following conditions:

1. Transfer of all departments of the Provincial Government except police to the charge of Indian Ministers;
2. Dyarchy will be worked on that basis until 1929 (when, at the latest, a further advance towards self-government will be due, according to the Government of India Act, 1919);
3. The Governor will undertake to recommend a further instalment of Provincial Autonomy, if the Swarajists administer the ministries satisfactorily;
4. Release of political prisoners;
5. The terms of agreement are to be finally settled at an all-parties' conference to be called by the Government.

The negotiations being secret, neither the Swarajists nor the Government officials stated the conditions. But these were generally known to be the approximate conditions. Later on, after the death of Das in June 1925, the Swarajists challenged the truth of the rumours about the negotiations; but the speech of Das made in the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur in the beginning of May does not leave room for any doubt that he had agreed to the above conditions. Judged by the standard of the Faridpur speech, these conditions might be fully acceptable by the Swarajists. Besides, in the midst of the rumpus over the ugly exposure of the secret negotiations, the following admissions were forthcoming from Nehru and Gandhi, both of whom were supposed to be parties to the negotiations.

In an interview to the press (quoted in the editorial of *The Bengalee*, 28 July 1925), Gandhi stated:

'I did not know that what was going on between Lord Lytton and Deshbandu (C. R. Das) could be described as negotiations. But some kind of communications were certainly going on between Lord Lytton and Deshbandhu through an intermediary. I did not know the actual and verifiable content of those communications, but I knew perhaps the general trend which it is neither profitable nor advisable to disclose.'

Motilal Nehru, in a letter (quoted in the editorial of the *Bengalee*, 4 August, wrote:

'Deshbandhu did communicate to me from time to time certain proposals which, he said, he had received from Lord Lytton through a friend . . . I shall always be ready and willing to discuss with the authorities the situation in Bengal as well as in the rest of the country with a view to an honourable settlement. Deshbandhu was expecting a further communication from Lord Lytton on the subject, and should His Excellency be pleased to continue the negotiations with me, I shall only be too glad to put myself at his disposal.'

CHAPTER NINE

The Faridpur Speech

It is not worthwhile to go further into this episode. The purpose of showing the rapid decline in the Swarajist demand will best be served by a simple perusal of Das's Faridpur speech. Here, there is no secret negotiation to be exposed; no room for denial; no place for doubt. The Faridpur speech was the most official and authoritative statement of the Party's policy. The following are the most characteristic passages of the speech:

> 'Then comes the question as to whether this ideal is to be realised within the Empire or outside it. The answer which the Congress has always given is within the Empire, if the Empire will recognise our rights, and outside the Empire if it does not . . . If the Empire furnished sufficient scope for the growth and development of our national life, the Empire idea is to be preferred . . .
>
> Indeed, the Empire gives us a vivid sense of many advantages. Dominion Status today is in no sense servitude. It is essentially an alliance by consent of those who form part of the Empire for material advantages in the real spirit of cooperation. Free alliance necessarily carries with it the right of separation . . . It is realised that under modern conditions no nation can live in isolation and the Dominion Status, while it affords complete protection to each constituent composing the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realise itself, develop itself and fulfil itself, and, therefore, it expresses and implies all the elements of Swaraj which I have mentioned.
>
> To me the idea is specially attractive because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world peace, in the ultimate federation of the world; and I think that the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—a federation of diverse races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilisation, its distinct mental outlook—if properly led with statesmen at the helm, is bound to make lasting contribution to the great problem that awaits the statesman, the problem of knitting the world into the greatest federation the mind can conceive, the federation of the human race . . . I think it is for the good of India, for the good of the commonwealth, for the good of the world, that India should strive for freedom within the commonwealth and so serve the cause of humanity.'

The idea contained in this quotation hardly needs any commentary. The utterance is inspired by the conviction that India can develop—can have 'the opportunity of self-realisation, self-development and self-fulfilment'—as a part of and, therefore, under the protection of the British Empire. Mr Das's love for the Empire might have bewildered many of his trusting followers. But it was not a mere rhetorical extravagance that he indulged in. He spoke with conviction created by facts. Had not India—the India of the bourgeoisie, until now represented by all the Nationalist parties—been accorded ample opportunity for 'self-development' within the Empire? Does not the Empire, in addition, hold out to the same India a guarantee against any revolutionary threat to life and property?

These considerations contributed to the crystallization of the 'national idea' as expounded by the Swarajist leader. But to the India on whose bent back this structure of 'human unity' will be built—to the down-trodden 98 per cent—this new ideal of Swaraj will fail to be convincing.

Further, while enunciating the methods by which this new ideal of Swaraj was to be realized, C. R. Das categorically ruled out 'armed revolution', and called upon the conference to do the same. He appealed:

> 'I ask those young men who are addicted to revolutionary methods, do they think that the people will side with them? When life and property is threatened the inevitable result is that the people who suffer or who think they may suffer recoil from such activities . . . I appeal to the young men of Bengal, who may even in their heart of hearts think in favour of violent methods, to desist from such thought, and I appeal to the Bengal Provincial Conference to declare clearly and unequivocally that in its opinion freedom cannot be achieved by such methods.'

The Nationalist movement should shun the path of violent revolution, because that section of the people having something to lose would be against it. Since the methods, without which complete independence cannot be won, are opposed by those having something to risk, the nation must be content with a fake substitute for independence. Still more: a safe and secure corner in the British Empire should be glorified as something superior to National Independence. The people who have lives to live, and property to be profited by, will recoil from revolution, actuated by the dictum—a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; but what portion of the Indian population is in that fortunate position? On the authority of Mr Das himself, only two per cent. Is the life of an average Indian worker, an Indian peasant or a member of the Indian lower middle class worth living? Is the precarious property that the latter two might own worth owning? It is not. Life is a drudgery—an endless misery. Property is a myth. It does not stave off starvation. Volumes can be quoted from the writings of the Nationalists themselves to show that the life of the Indian masses is living death. Those who have nothing to lose are not afraid of revolution. On the contrary, revolution is their creation. So, it is the two per cent of the Indian population who, according to Mr Das, will recoil from revolution, because it may endanger their comfortable life and lucrative property; and in the interests and at the behest of this infinitesimal minority, the only salvation of the overwhelming majority should be tabooed as a sinful method unworthy of the spiritual traditions of India. The Swarajist leader had, indeed, travelled a long way in less than three years. Only in 1922 he declared himself in favour of 'Swaraj for the masses—for the 98 per cent.'

Now, here are the concrete suggestions as regards the conditions for the agreement between Imperialism and Nationalism:

> '. . . the Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the commonwealth in the near future, and that in the meantime till Swaraj comes, a sure and sufficient foundation is and must necessarily be a matter of negotiation and settlement—settlement not only between the Government and the people as a whole but also between the different communities not excluding the European and Anglo-Indian communities, as I said in my presidential speech at Gaya.'
>
> 'I must also add that we on our part should be in a position to give some sort of undertaking that we shall not by word, deed or gesture, encourage the revolutionary propaganda and that we shall make every effort to put an end to such a movement. This undertaking is not needed, for the Bengal Provincial Conference has never identified itself with the revolutionary propaganda . . .'

It should be noticed that what is demanded is not self-government (not even in a diluted form), but 'guarantee for the recognition of our right to Swaraj within the British Commonwealth'. The establishment even of this Swaraj will be preceded by time and work to lay the sure and sufficient foundation the nature of which, again, will be determined in the negotiation with the British rulers. The Swarajist leader identifies himself with the spokesmen of imperialism by making the settlement of communal differences a condition for the establishment of Swaraj. And lastly, the Nationalist bourgeoisie is unequivocally committed to the programme of counter-revolution. In other words, in case the Indian masses dare to challenge the suitability of the new ideal of freedom to their conditions, the Nationalist bourgeoisie will willingly join hands with British imperialism to put them back in their place. Then, repressive laws and discretionary powers against which the Swarajists have fulminated so much, will become perfectly legitimate.

Still one more quotation from the peroration. The entire philosophy of post-protection Nationalism is restated here:

> 'I see signs of reconciliation everywhere. The world is tired of conflicts, and I think I see a real desire for construction, for consolidation. I believe

> that India has a great part to play in the history of the world. She has a message to deliver, and she is anxious to deliver it in the Council Chamber of that great Commonwealth of Nations of which I have spoken. Will British statesmen rise to the occasion? To them I say, you can have peace today on terms that are honourable both to you and to us. To the British community in India, I say, you have come with traditions of freedom, and you cannot refuse to cooperate with us in our national struggle, provided we recognize your right to be heard in the final settlement. To the people of Bengal I say . . . fight hard, but fight clean; and when the time for settlement comes, as it is bound to come, enter the peace conference, not in a spirit of arrogance, but with becoming humility, so that it may be said of you that you were greater in your achievement than in adversity.'

No apology is needed for these lengthy quotations. Their importance cannot be exaggerated. They are conclusive evidence of the social character of Swarajist politics. The Swaraj Party was the party of bourgeois Nationalism in its days of decline, as the inevitable result of the changed economic relation between British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie. Had the programme of the Swaraj Party reflected anything but the interests of Indian capitalism, it would not come down to this nadir of moderation. As it is, it had to readjust itself to the changes in its economic background.

CHAPTER TEN

The Evolution of the Swaraj Party

After the sudden death of C. R. Das in June 1925, the leaders of the Swaraj Party met at his residence in Calcutta and wholly endorsed the 'sentiments regarding violence and the strong condemnation thereof laid down in the Faridpur Speech'. The Swarajist leaders, at the same time, regretted that Birkenhead's statement of policy had not taken into consideration the olive branch held out by C. R. Das; and consequently the chances of honourable cooperation had become difficult. The Swarajist position had become extremely pitiable. They were eager to cooperate; but imperialism totally ignored their repeated offers.

Notwithstanding the difficulty created by Birkenhead's sabre-rattling speech in the Parliament, Swarajist anxiety to find a basis of cooperation did not flag. The first step was taken by the leader, Motilal Nehru himself, who accepted in July a nominated seat on the Skeen Committee to investigate the possibility of establishing in India a military academy of the type of Sandhurst. The next move came from a still more unexpected direction. It was the turn of the arch non-cooperator, V. J. Patel, to cooperate with the Government as the President of the Legislative Assembly. The Government spokesman welcomed the new president and promised him full and loyal support of the official benches. On accepting his seat, Patel made a speech which contained the following:

> 'I have accepted office with my eyes open, fully realizing the implications attached to it. I became a candidate because I thought I could better serve India in this way. The Swarajists have been described as destructive critics: our duty is to show that we know also how to construct. The Viceroy has pleaded for cooperation. Sir Frederick Whyte (the retiring President) has pleaded for cooperation. Now I also plead for cooperation. I particularly appeal to the official benches. I am ready in every sense of the term to extend cooperation to them.
>
> 'From this moment I cease to be a party man. I belong to all the parties. If the Viceroy wants, I will attend him ten times a day, and my assistance will always be at the disposal of the Government officials.'

Thus spoke the leader of the Swarajist Left Wing, all dressed up in wig and robe of office, as president of the Reformed Legislature which but three years ago he had denounced as a trap of the 'Satanic' Government. The year before, Patel had created a sensation by walking into the Legislative Assembly dressed in Khaddar and Gandhi cap. Verily 'they who came to scoff remained to pray.'

In September 1925, the 'national demand' was again put forward in the Legislative Assembly meeting in Simla. The occasion was the debate on the Report of the Muddiman Committee (appointed after the first resolution containing the 'national demand' had been passed in 1924) to examine the working of the reformed constitution and recommend amendments, if necessary. The committee was divided in its finding. The majority recommended a series of small departmental changes to ease the situation. The minority demanded a Royal Commission to recommend extension of Reforms. The 'national demand' was put forward in the shape of a resolution recommending the adoption of the minority report as against the majority report of the Government. In spite of all the parliamentary stage thunder, the second 'national demand' resembled the first only in name. In the rather lengthy resolution, the very moderate concrete demand was shrouded with the exuberance of juridical and parliamentary phraseology. Being based on the Minority Report, the resolution essentially demanded the appointment of a Royal Commission. In doing so, the challenge to the Preamble of the Government of India Act of 1919, which makes the British Parliament the judge of when and how measures of self-government will be granted to India, was withdrawn. It was accepted that a Royal Commission appointed by the English Crown with the approval of the British Parliament was the proper judge of the time and measure of self-government to be granted to India. So the paramount authority of the British Parliament was recognized. As a matter of fact, it had already been done in the previous years in the Nehru amendment. This time the recognition of the supremacy of the British parliament was only clearer.

The distinguishing feature of the Nationalist resolution was that it did not demand any immediate change in the constitution. It simply embodied the outlines of a scheme of constitution which should be considered by 'a convention, Round-Table Conference, or any other suitable agency', to be called into being by the Viceroy 'in consultation with the Legislative Assembly. . . ' It is to be noted that even a Round-Table Conference, which was the Cardinal point of the 'national demand in 1924' was not insisted upon. A Royal Commission would be equally acceptable. The following are the main features of the scheme of a new constitutional reform recommended by the resolution:

1. Weakening of the power of the British Secretary of State for India in favour of the British Viceroy;
2. Control by the Assembly of the State finances except under the three very important heads of military expenditure, budget of

the political and foreign affairs departments, and payment of debts and liabilities in England;

3. Indianization of the Army;
4. Legislature to be composed of only elected members, but no definite proposition is made about the extension of the franchise;
5. Executive to be responsible to the Legislature in the Provinces as well as in the Centre. In the latter case, the military, political and foreign affairs departments to be excepted for a specified period;
6. Provincial autonomy with some residuary power in the Central Government.

Remarkably enough, self-government is not even mentioned. The gist of the resolution is that complete political peace will be declared if the Government would agree to set up some sort of machinery to prepare a plan of constitutional reform on the basis of the suggestion made in the resolution. It was doubtlessly a reply to Birkenhead, who had asked the Nationalists to produce a constitution which could be seriously considered. The position taken by the Nationalists is very little removed from the position of the Government. The former have gradually brought their demand down to what the latter is prepared to concede. The Government of India Act provides for a further instalment of self-government not later than 1929. It is agreed that on or before 1929 a Royal Commission will be appointed to recommend the grant of a further measure of self-government, having made an investigation into the experience of the first reforms. The latest Nationalist demand is hardly anything more than this.

Imperialism is opposed to any immediate constitutional reform and would not admit any denial of the principle that the British Parliament is the ultimate judge of the manner and progress of Indian constitutional reform. The Nationalist resolution of September 1925 removed the hitch on both these points. What remained to be done was for the Swarajists to act upon their own resolution. Here they met with difficulty inside their own ranks. The leaders found it difficult to bring their petty bourgeois following around to see that acceptance of office by the Swarajists would be another—a still more effective—form of non-cooperation. This internal difficulty caused a practical split in the party. The Right Wing, represented by the Mahratta Responsivists, openly came out in favour of accepting office following upon the appointment of Tambe as a member of the Central Provinces Executive Council. The bourgeois wing of the Swaraj Party began showing their true colours. They acted logically. Their action was fully justified by the genesis and evolution of the party. The majority leaders, with an eye to the middle class following, still thundered. But a political party cannot be maintained by speeches to the gallery. A split became inevitable when the middle class adherents of the Swaraj Party ceased to find satisfaction in the inglorious role of camp followers of the bourgeoisie.

The majority condemnation of the Right defection cannot be taken seriously. It was actuated by the anxiety to keep the middle class Left in the party. The latter, whose economic conditions must militate against all compromise in the national struggle, will leave the Swaraj Party as soon as the position taken up by the Right is ratified as the official policy of the party. Without middle class support, the Swaraj Party will cease to be an independent political factor. It will be forced to merge its chequered existence with the outspoken bourgeois party—Independent Nationalists. On the other hand the middle class and petty intellectual elements cannot be perpetually kept inside the party unless the Swarajist programme breaks away from the mooring of bourgeois Nationalism. This can never happen, because socially and historically the programme of the Swaraj Party is the programme of bourgeois Nationalism. By its very nature, the Swaraj Party was a stage of political transition in the Indian Nationalist movement. It is bound to be split in consequence of class differentiation inside the Nationalist ranks.*

The birth of the Swaraj Party indicated the separation of the Nationalist bourgeoisie from the revolutionary masses. The impending split of it is the sign that the big bourgeoisie and the middle classes cannot walk hand in hand any further. They must part company.

Besides, the most recent official action and attitude of the party do not justify the condemnation of Right deviation. Speaking in support of the Nationalist amendment to the Government Reforms resolution, the Independent leader, Jinnah, asked the Government:

> 'Do you want Pundit Motilal Nehru to go down on his knee before the Viceregal Throne and then only you will appoint a Royal Commission? What has he been doing in the Assembly? Has he not been cooperating? What other evidence do you want to produce that responsible leaders are not offering you cooperation?

This was obviously a reply to Birkenhead's stipulation that the condition for a further grant of political reform should be full and unreserved cooperation of the responsible Nationalist leaders with the existing system of government. The spokesman of the big bourgeoisie pointed out that the condition had been complied with even by the most radical wing of the constitutional Nationalist movement. This was said of the attitude of the Swarajist leader, Nehru, and, therefore, of the official attitude of the entire party on 8 September 1925; that is, shortly before the Right leader, Tambe, accepted office in the Central Provinces. Since Jinnah's characterization of the Swarajists' attitude was not in the least contradicted by the latter, it can be taken as the true picture of the situation. Then there is the following testimony of a very talkative Swarajist who pretends to be extremely radical:

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* This forecast, as regards the internal contradiction of the Swaraj Party made in the beginning of the year has been completely borne out by subsequent facts. The Ahmedabad session of the All-India Congress Committee and the proceedings of the Bengal Provincial Conference (Krishnanagar) were straws indicating which way the wind blows. The rank and file members and the adherents of the Swaraj Party are showing signs of revolt against the policy of compromise with Imperialism—a policy dictated by the interests of the bourgeoisie.

> 'The Swaraj Party has really accepted the Liberal Federation Programme to show that the country stood united in its demands'—Chaman Lal (Swarajist) in the reform debate.

This damaging testimony was also given before the Right defection began.

Lastly, the following question from a Liberal Nationalist organ summarizes the Swarajist attitude in a still earlier period:

> 'Step by step, stage by stage, they (the Swarajists) have been coming down from the dizzy heights of obstruction to the plainer paths of negation of co-operation, and finally to the acceptance of responsive cooperation as a principle of their political programme.'
> —(*The Bengalee* (Liberal Organ), 22 July 1925).

The Swarajists made more progress in the same direction since the above was written. In view of these facts (many more could be added), the official condemnation of the Right defection can be taken only for a bluff which will soon be called.*

Let us look at the picture from the other side. How do the imperialists judge the situation? What is their attitude? Generally there reigns a satisfaction that things are well in hand in India; and suggestions for eventual political reforms to meet the moderate national demand are heard from inspired sources. Here are some examples:

> 'Now that India is returning to the paths of patience, it is all important that we should show her that substantial progress can be made through constitutionalism and cooperation.'
> —(*The Manchester Guardian,* 21 December 1925).

The Near East and India, which is considered to be an authoritative organ of British imperialism, wrote on 26 November 1926:

> '1929 is not far off, and it is certain that an important step will be taken, if, indeed, it is not taken earlier.'

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* The Sabarmati Pact revealed the hypocrisy of the position taken by Motilal Nehru and his followers.

Commenting upon the appointement of the new Viceroy, the *Times* predicted that the term of office of the new Viceroy would coincide with a period of great constitutional reform.

So, by all indications, it is clear that in the near future, imperialism will make a generous gesture to meet the 'national demand' which has been reduced to a harmless limit. This will mark the conclusion of the agreement between imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie. This may have a still more far-reaching effect. This will enable the essentially bourgeois Swarajist leaders like Nehru, who are still identifying themselves with the petty bourgeois majority, to show their hand, and declare in favour of responsive cooperation (for all practical purposes, if not in so many words). He would not have much scruple to break the promise of civil disobedience* made at the Cawnpur Congress, and to cross over the line.† In that case, they may even take over with them a considerable section of the middle class membership on the plea that there has been a 'change of heart' on the part of the bureaucracy.

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* Civil disobedience was the culminating point in the programme of Gandhist non-cooperation. It signified mass refusal to obey the laws—suspension of the payment of rents and taxes. Naturally, this measure cannot be dissociated from a revolutionary uprising. It can be put into effect only as the prelude to armed insurrection. When, inspired by this revolutionary programme, the masses rallied round the National Congress, the country was shocked by great strikes and demonstrations in the towns, and gigantic peasant revolts spread like wildfire. Gandhi, in the beginning of 1922, declared that the country was not fit for civil disobedience. He stipulated that no step towards civil disobedience should be taken unless an atmosphere of perfect non-violence had been created in the country. Since, by its very nature, civil disobedience cannot be dissociated from eventual violent conflict with the forces of counter-revolution, the stipulation of Gandhi meant abandoning the programme forever.

† This was written in February 1926.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Cawnpur Congress and After

The Fortieth Annual Session of the Indian National Congress, which was held in Cawnpur in the last week of December, conclusively abandoned the programme of boycott and delivered itself body and soul to the Swarajist version of constitutional agitation. Under the guidance of the prophet of Non-Cooperation, Gandhi, the petty bourgeoisie ratified the bankrupt Swarajist programme of parliamentary obstruction. They had nothing better to look up to for leadership than the moribund Swaraj Party, rent asunder by internal contradictions. This is indicative of the pitiable state that Nationalist politics has sunk into under compromising bourgeois leadership.

The following were the principal political decisions of the Cawnpur Congress: (1) To give fullest support to the parliamentarism of the Swaraj Party; (2) to invite other political parties (that is, the parties of the Right), irrespective of beliefs, to join the Congress; (3) to support the Commonwealth of India Bill*; (4) to fix the goal of the Nationalist movement at Dominion Status (self-government within the British Empire); (5) to call upon the Swarajist members to vacate their parliamentary seats and seek re-election if the Government rejects the 'national demand' and (6) to change the policy of the Congress as soon as the Government 'will make a sincere and magnanimous gesture of goodwill and good faith.'

In the Cawnpur Congress were uttered many oratorical threats that failed to threaten anybody. The Swarajist leader, Motilal Nehru, heroically informed the naive petty bourgeois gathering that if the Government rejected the 'national demands' the Swarajists would resign their seats in the Legislatures and begin the preparation for civil disobedience. Remembering that Nehru was a leading member of the

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* The Commonwealth of India Bill drafted by Mrs Besant contains a project of reform subscribed to by the extreme bourgeois nationalist elements. It proposes some minor readjustment in the present administrative machinery, and recommends a draft constitution for India when she will eventually be raised to the same status of self-government as enjoyed by Canada, Australia, etc. When, a year and a half ago, the Bill was first published, the Swaraj party refused to subscribe to it. Later on, Gandhi publicly declared that he would induce the Swaraj Party to subscribe to the Bill provided that its adoption by the British Parliament was guaranteed. The Swarajist demand formulated by Das at Faridpur almost coincides with the provisions of the Commonwealth of India Bill.

Congress Commission which in the revolutionary days of 1922 declared the country unfit for civil disobedience, that threat could not be taken seriously. The demand for the repudiation of the programme of revolutionary mass action, which led to the foundation of the parliamentary Swaraj Party, was based upon that finding of the Civil Disobedience Committee. Therefore, none but a simpleton would believe Motilal Nehru when he flamboyantly talked of civil disobedience after all these historical events. If he found the country unfit for civil disobedience in 1922, when the echo of the great revolutionary demonstration was still lingering in the atmosphere and the horizon was still ablaze with the smouldering flames of peasant revolt, how much easier would it be for Nehru to disregard the pledge, made to dupe his petty bourgeois following, on the pretext that the country was not ready. What Nehru actually promised was that after resigning their seats, the Swarajists would seek re-election on a programme drawn up by the Congress. Everything depends on that programme. Such a staunch defender of capitalism and landlordism as the Swaraj Party never can and never will seriously consider the project of civil disobedience which cannot be put into effect without the revolutionary action of the worker and peasant masses.

The Swarajist leader himself did not mean anything serious when he made the pledge to the Cawnpur Congress. It was meant for the gallery. He knew that the 'national demand' had been brought to such a degree of moderation as almost to guarantee its eventual acceptance by the Government. Civil disobedience will ever remain a hypothetical proposition. Then, we have seen the 'national demands' rejected more than once, without evoking any retaliatory measure from the Swarajist side.

As a matter of fact, the Swaraj Party began to climb down from the position it took against the Right dissenters, immediately after the Cawnpur Congress. The leading members of the Right resigned their seats in the Legislatures—Central and Provincial, and declared their intention to seek re-election on their programme of political peace, which they euphemistically call 'Responsive Cooperation'. This Was an extremely clever move on their part. The social composition of the electorate assures their re-election. Nehru and his followers at the head of the Swarajist Majority were outwitted. They immediately made it understood that if the responsivist leaders are re-elected, the party would find it necessary to change its programme, because the re-election of the Right leaders on their programme would show that the country was in favour of that programme. In other words, as soon as the bourgeois voters had made it clear that they have no more use for parliamentary fireworks, the Swaraj Party would meekly obey and get down to the business of discovering the identity between 'Responsive Cooperation' and 'Honourable Cooperation.'

While running down the responsivist 'heresy'—a policy dictated by capitalist interest—the leader of the party paid homage to and received the benediction of the god Capital. On 3 December 1925, Motilal Nehru was entertained by the cotton mill owners at a tea party. The president of the Millowners' Association thanked the Swarajist leader for the great services rendered by his party to the premier industry by supporting the abolition of the Excise Duty. Nehru replied:

> 'I and my colleagues have done our duty. I assure the millowners that we will act similarly whenever the industry will be in danger of being exploited by foreign or unfair competition. We went in the Legislative Assembly to work for the country, and not for any particular section or party.'

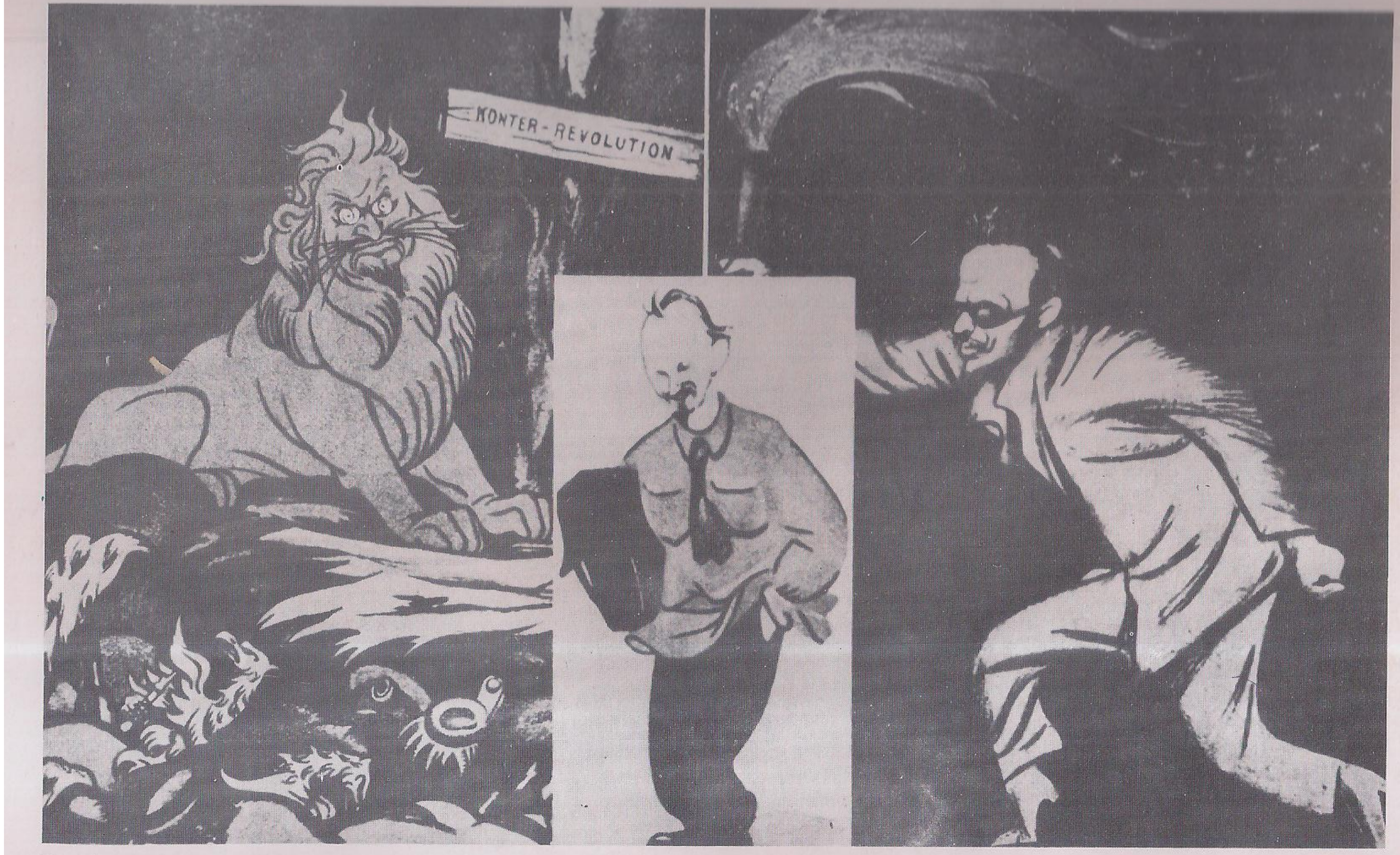
So, the Swaraj Party as a party stood solidly as the political instrument of the capitalist and landowning classes, even at the moment it was pandering to the radical illusions of the middle class. The Swaraj Party entered the Legislature 'to work for the country'; but it is notorious whom they served. They served exclusively capitalist and landed interests. Now that these same interests (which are identified with the entire country by the bourgeois Nationalists) can be better served by declaring political peace and cooperating with the British Government, the Swaraj Party, as good patriots, will have no compunction to do what should be done 'in the interests of the country'. The Right Wing leaders had more courage and conviction than the rest. They were the pioneers in the march to the spiritual home. In this period of differentiation between the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, the Mahratta leaders played the same role as C. R. Das had played in the previous period which was marked by the separation of bourgeois nationalism from revolutionary mass action. Just as parliamentary obstruction replaced mass passive resistance, just so will parliamentary obstruction be abandoned in favour of constitutional opposition. A steady change in the economic relation between imperialism and native capitalism, which is the social basis of bourgeois Nationalism, has caused these successive stages of evolution in the political sphere. It was a pre-determined and inevitable process.

This debacle of bourgeois Nationalism, however, does not by any means indicate the end of the anti-imperialist struggle. It only means that the social basis of Nationalism will be shifted from the bourgeoisie to the masses. This process of widening the social basis of Nationalism is parallel to the process of widening the social basis of imperialism by drawing the colonial bourgeoisie economically and politically closer to it. So, the future of Indian politics will be the organization of all the classes of the native society, except the landlords, the big bourgeoisie and their middle class satellites, in the struggle for national freedom. The programme of the new phase of nationalism will naturally be entirely different from the programme which uptil now has dominated the Nationalist movement.

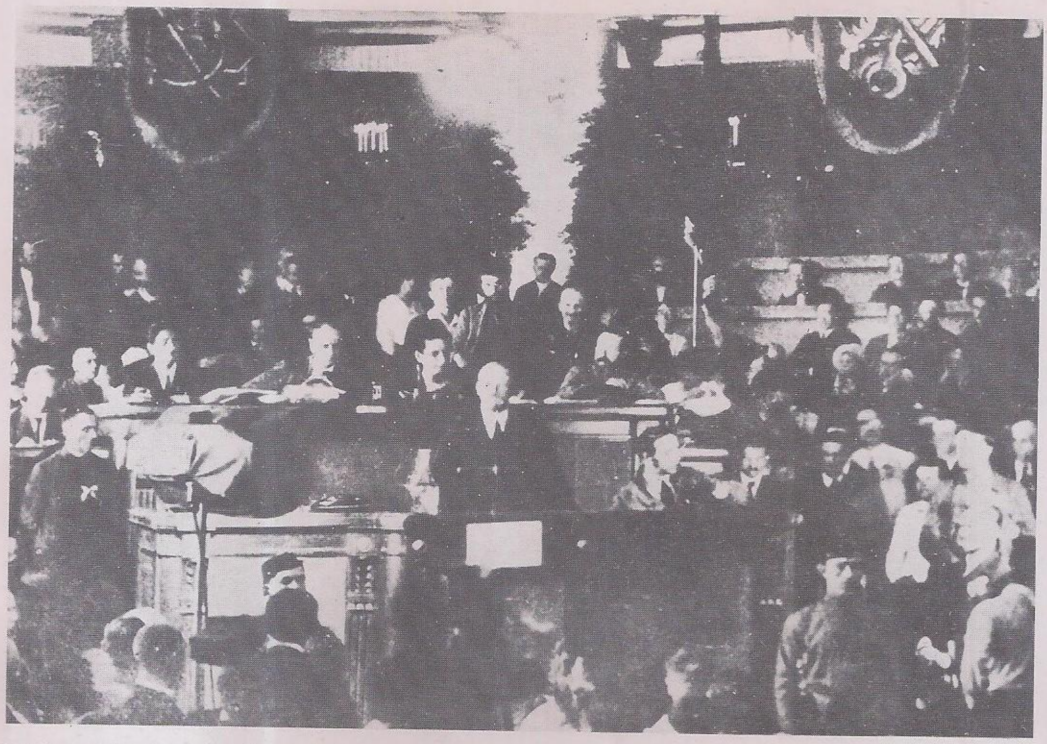
The formation of the bourgeois bloc in the Unity Conference of Bombay forced upon the Swaraj Party the necessity to define its position. It must abandon the ambiguous position taken up at Cawnpur. It must take sides—with the bourgeoisie for the programme of constitutional reform or with the people for revolution. This ultimatum of the bourgeoisie frightened the Swarajist leaders. Immediately after the dramatic walk-out they met the Responsivists at Sabarmati to discuss the conditions for accepting office. The Sabarmati Pact was a negation of the decision of the Cawnpur Congress and the walk-out was as a result of those decisions. The pact meant a complete capitulation of the Swaraj Party. It signified the triumph of bourgeois Nationalism and political death of the Swaraj Party. It recorded the victory of Responsive Cooperation which was so demagogically fought at Cawnpur; and Responsive Cooperation means nothing but a complete compromise with imperialism to cooperate with the British Government in response to the concessions made to the Indian bourgeoisie. The bourgeois bloc, in which the Swaraj Party would submerge itself through the instrumentality of the Sabarmati Pact, was a *union sacree* not against the foreign rule, but to fight the revolutionary movement. It would fight the Swaraj Party should the latter still persist in keeping company with the revolutionary wing of the Nationalist movement.

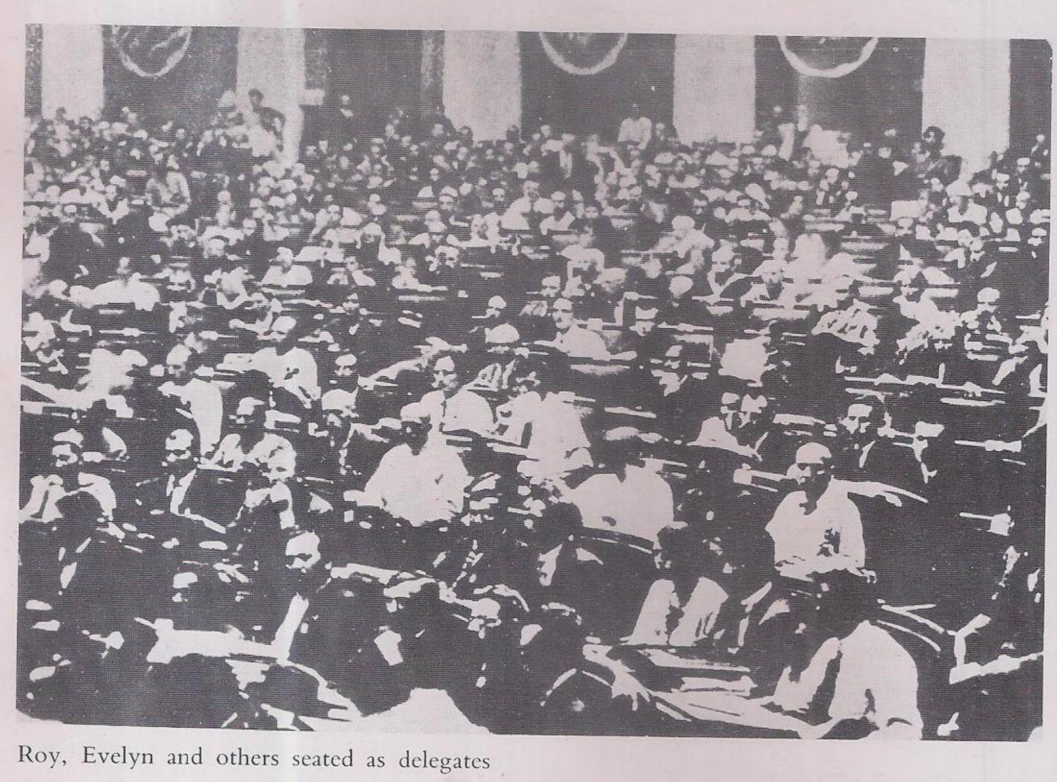
The general elections are a few months ahead. The time set for the extension of reforms coincides with the lifetime of the next legislatures. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that in the coming elections such candidates should be returned as stand unequivocally on the platform of bourgeois Nationalism. If the Swaraj Party did not fall in line, war would be declared on them. The bourgeoisie succeeded in terrorizing the Swarajist leaders who had always stood on the platform of bourgeois Nationalism. But the surrender of the leaders at Sabarmati opened the eyes of the Swarajist ranks. The pact was repudiated. The split in the Nationalist ranks along the class line was complete. The line runs through the Swaraj Party also. Consequently, the Swaraj Party has virtually split on the issue of compromise with imperialism versus revolutionary mass struggle for freedom. This is the case in spite of the fact that the revolt in the ranks obliged the Swarajist leaders to go back on their signature to the pact of capitulation.

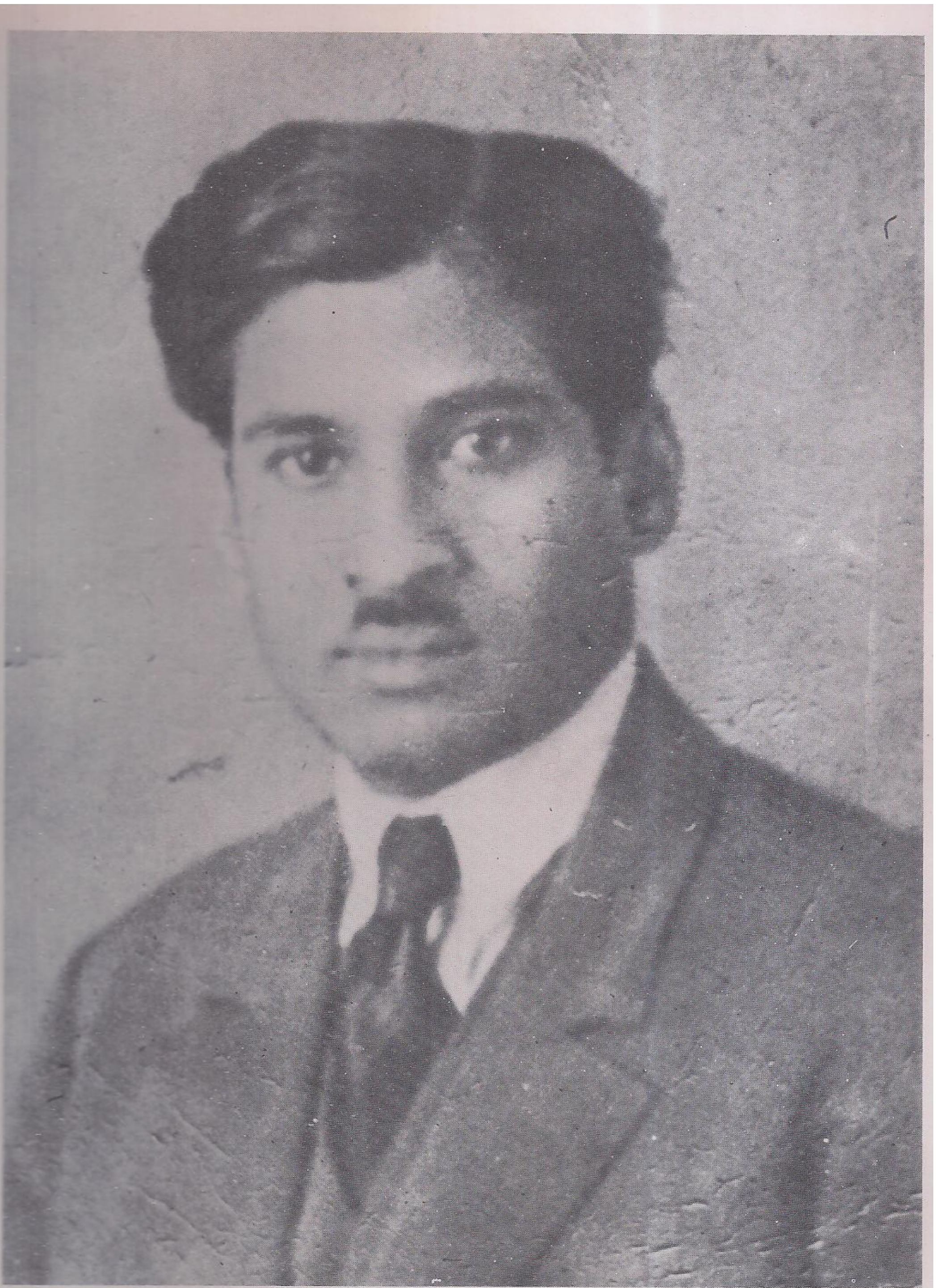
The bourgeois bloc is a historic phenomenon. All the events in the Nationalist movement ever since the betrayal of Bardoli have been heading towards it. The bloc marks the termination of a certain process of evolution. It is the crystallization of the policy of compromise with imperialism on the basis of the Reform of 1919—to work them for what they are worth and to negotiate for further concessions. This line is dictated by the immediate interests of the native bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the compromising elements in the Indian Nationalist movement are strengthened and encouraged by the fact that British imperialism is obliged to meet these elements halfway. The collapse of bourgeois Nationalism is inevitable. It is determined by the economic relation between the Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism.


KONTER-REVOLUTION

Trotsky, Bukharin, Radek


Lenin addressing the Second Congress


Roy, Evelyn and others seated as delegates



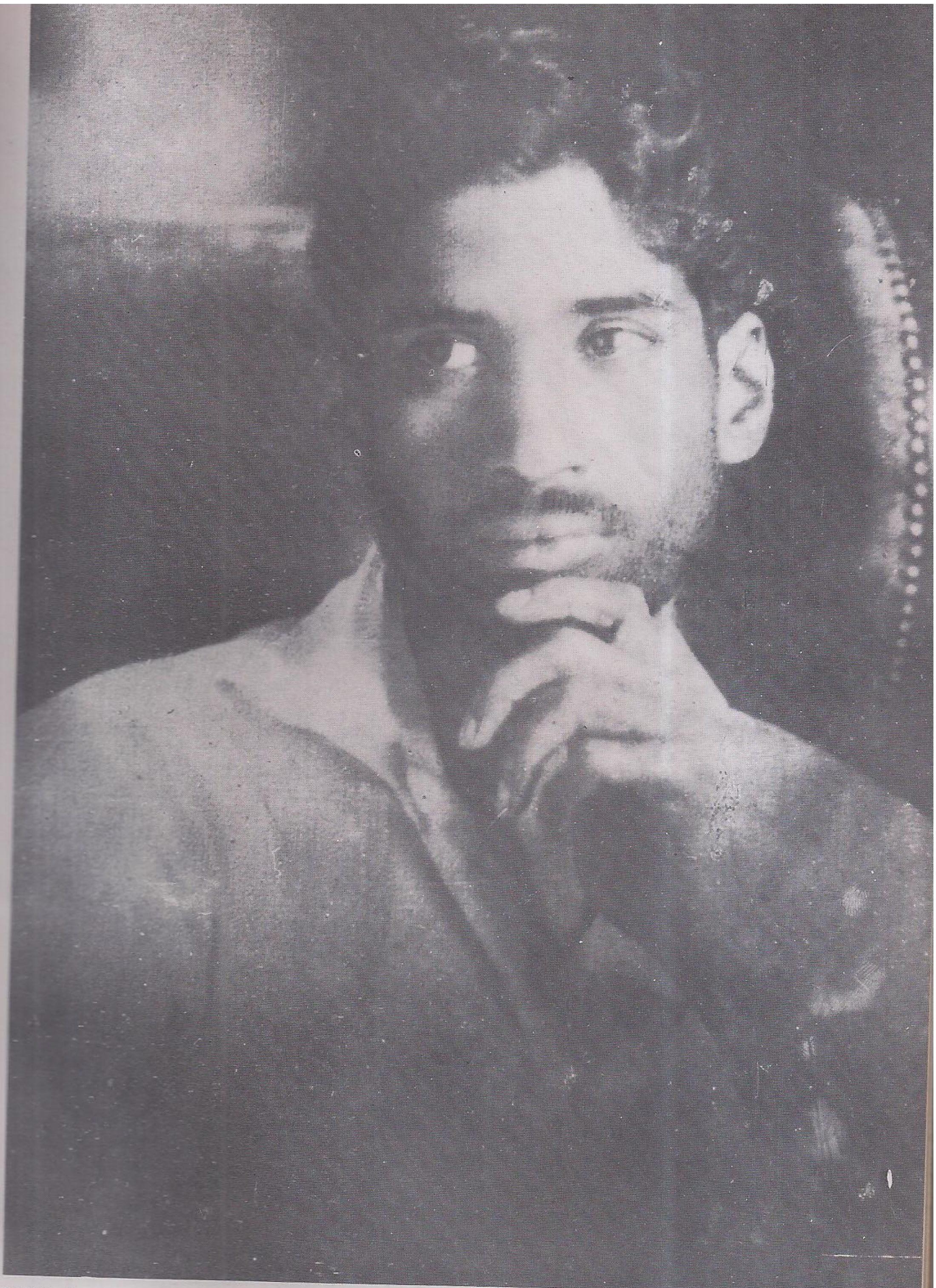
M.N. Roy in Berlin, 1923

Chittaranjan Das in Presidency Jail

Lala Lajpat Rai

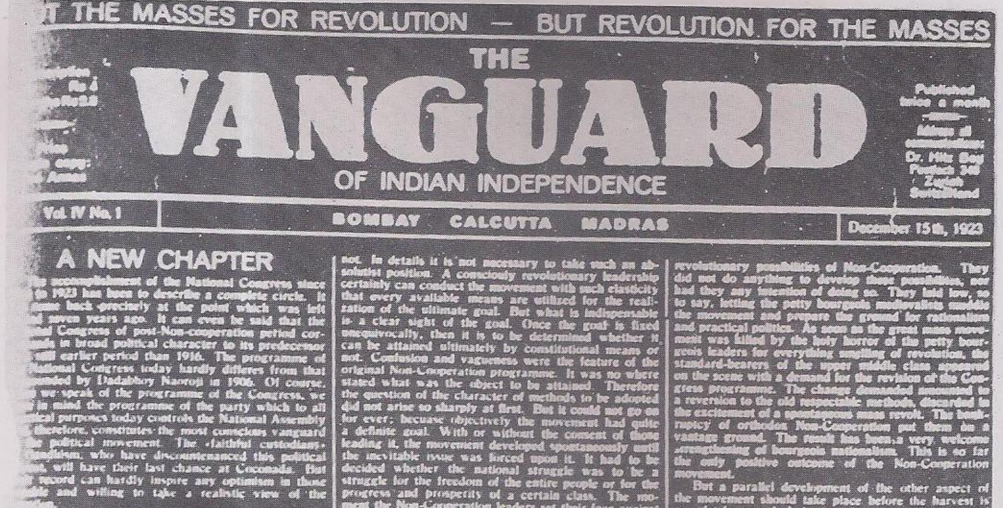
Henri Barbusse

Sen Katayama



M.N. Roy in Moscow, 1924

Evelyn Roy in Moscow, 1924



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A NEW CHAPTER

accomplishment of the National Congress since to 1923 has been to describe a complete circle. It back precisely at the point which was left seven years ago. It can even be said that the Congress of post-Non-cooperation period cor- in broad political character to its predecessor earlier period than 1916. The programme of National Congress today hardly differs from that by Dadabhoy Naoroji in 1906. Of course, we speak of the programme of the Congress, we in mind the programme of the party which to all purposes today controls the National Assembly therefore, constitutes the most conscious vanguard political movement. The faithful custodians, who have discountenanced this political will have their last chance at Coconada. But record can hardly inspire any optimism in those and willing to take a realistic view of the

The National Movement has turned a corner. We before the opening of a new chapter in the history struggle for freedom. In this fateful moment it is to make a review of the past, estimate the forces and prepare for the future. There is no however, that this much-needed task has undertaken by any responsible party. The high of the movement stands divided. The seri- of this divided counsel is accentuated by the talks about unity where there is none of it. These may be necessary to save the face of the lead- but they certainly do not make for progress of the

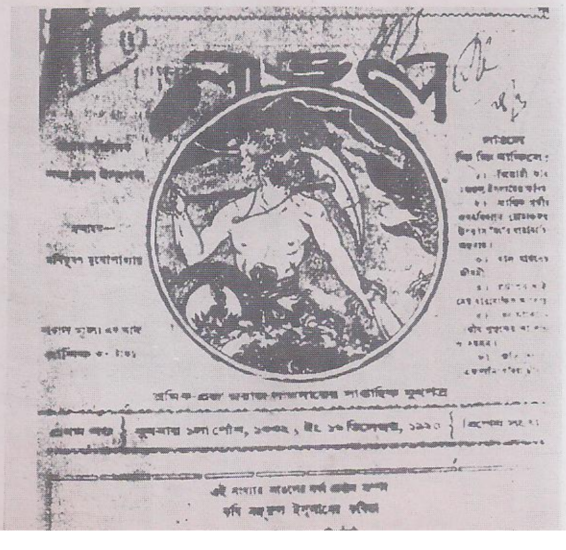
Before looking back upon the past, let us examine position occupied by the movement today. The fift not. In details it is not necessary to take such an absolutist position. A consciously revolutionary leadership certainly can conduct the movement with such elasticity that every available means are utilised for the realisation of the ultimate goal. But what is indispensable is a clear sight of the goal. Once the goal is fixed unequivocally, then it is to be determined whether it can be attained ultimately by constitutional means or not. Confusion and vagueness were the feature of the original Non-Cooperation programme. It was no where stated what was the object to be attained. Therefore the question of the character of methods to be adopted did not arise so sharply at first. But it could not go on for ever; because objectively the movement had quite a definite goal. With or without the consent of those leading it, the movement developed spontaneously until the inevitable issue was forced upon it. It had to be decided whether the national struggle was to be a struggle for the freedom of the entire people or for the progress and prosperity of a certain class. The moment the Non-Cooperation leaders set their face against the use of mass energy for the development of the movement, the real social character of the programme became evident. There was no mistake that the object of the National Congress had undergone hardly any change inspite of the fact that new social elements had been drawn into it. It became evident that the direction of the movement was to be determined not by the will of the masses to fight, but in accordance with the convenience of the upper classes. The battles of such a movement are not fought in the streets, on barricades, but in parliaments and council chambers.

Thus it is clear that the Swaraj Party, which is the leader of the national movement today, is not a negation of the Non-Cooperation movement, but on the contrary, is the logical consequence of it. And it is also to be revolutionary possibilities of Non-Cooperation. They did not do anything to develop those possibilities, nor had they any intention of doing so. They laid low, so to say, letting the petty bourgeois moderation muddle the movement and prepare the ground for rationalism and practical politics. As soon as the great mass movement was killed by the holy horror of the petty bourgeois leaders for everything smelling of revolution, the standard-bearers of the upper middle class appeared on the scene with a demand for the revision of the Congress programme. The change demanded amounted to a reversion to the old respectable methods, discarded in the excitement of a spontaneous mass revolt. The bankruptcy of orthodox Non-Cooperation put them on a vantage ground. The result has been a very welcome strengthening of bourgeois nationalism. This is so far the only positive outcome of the Non-Cooperation movement.

But a parallel development of the other aspect of the movement should take place before the harvest is completely reaped. Left alone, bourgeois nationalism of the Swaraj Party will not have any more brilliant a career than that of the Moderates. It will end in a compromise. In fact, its programme does not call for anything more. Therefore, the other two elements, which militated in the ranks of Non-Cooperation, should also find their respective expression. They must also assert themselves on the new political situation. They must play a befitting role in the next act of the drama. The new chapter of the movement should record these incidents. If the tactics of orthodox Non-Cooperation proved unsuitable for the expression of upper middle-class demands, they are more so for the masses and the proletarianised lower middle-class. The future struggle for the leadership of the national movement will not be between bourgeois nationalism of the Swaraj Party and

The Vanguard of Indian Independence, 1923

M.N. Roy at the International Agrarian Institute, Moscow, 1926



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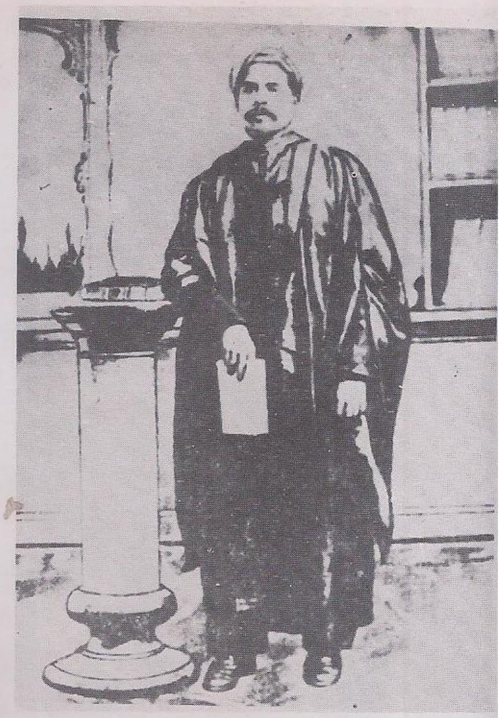

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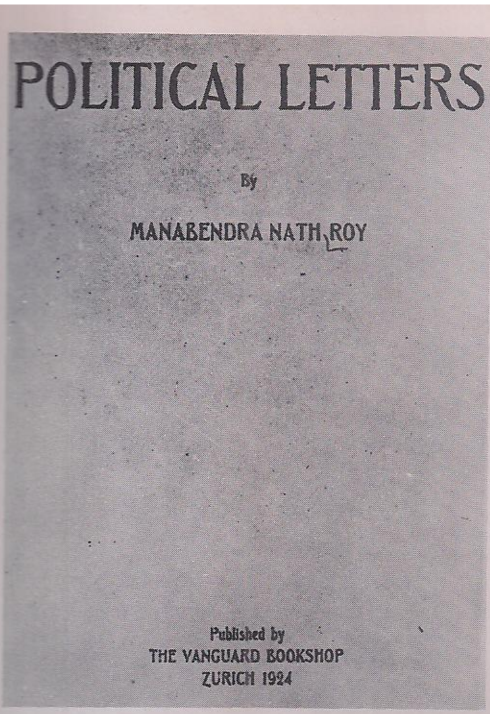

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By

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ZURICH 1924

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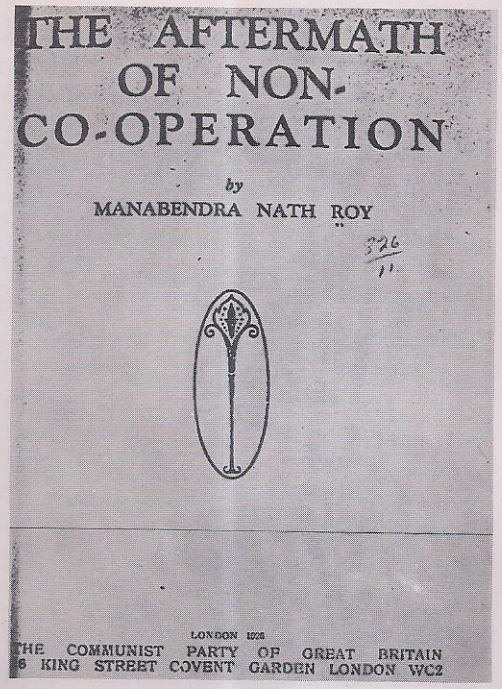

THE AFTERMATH
OF NON-
CO-OPERATION

by
MANABENDRA NATH ROY

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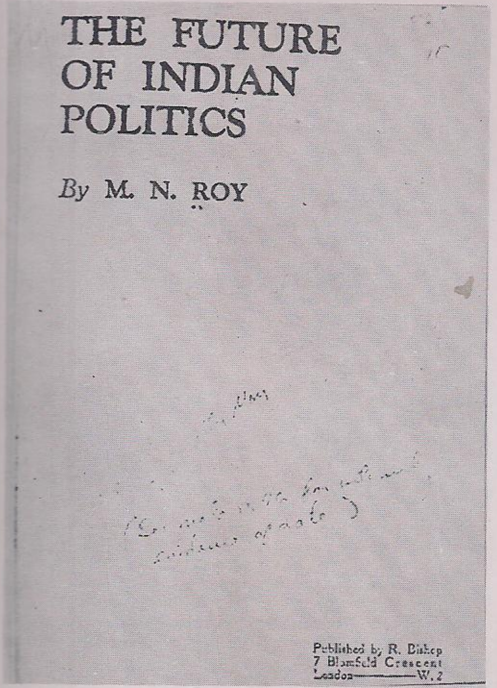

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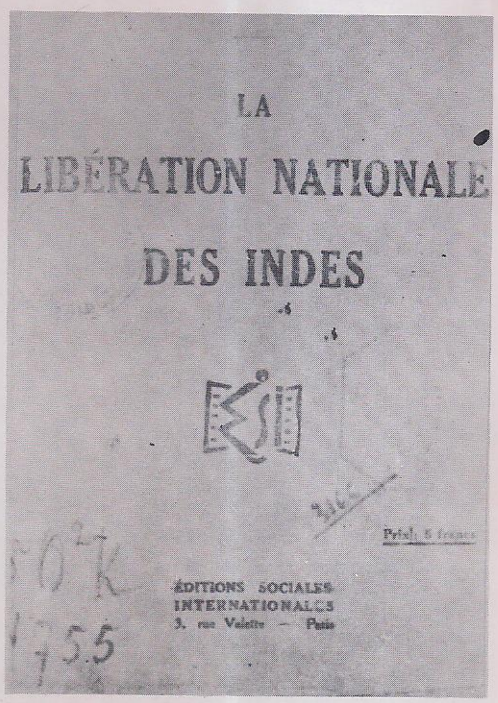

LA

LIBÉRATION NATIONALE

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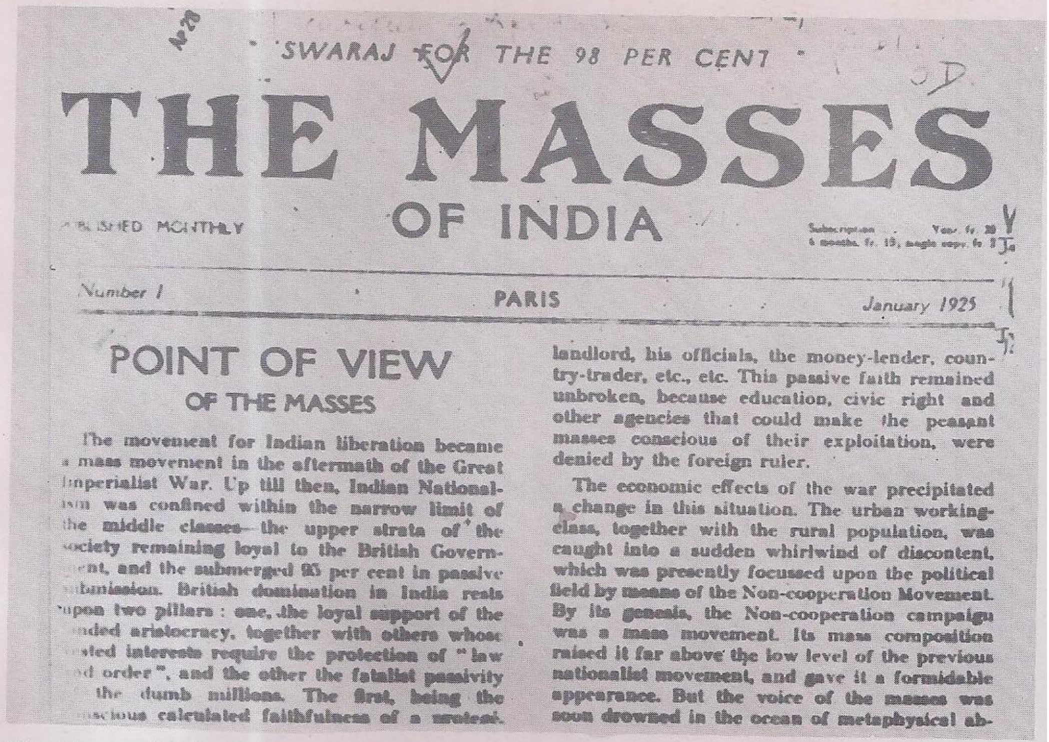
La Liberation Nationale des Indes, Paris, 1927



"SWARAJ FOR THE 98 PER CENT"

THE MASSES
OF INDIA

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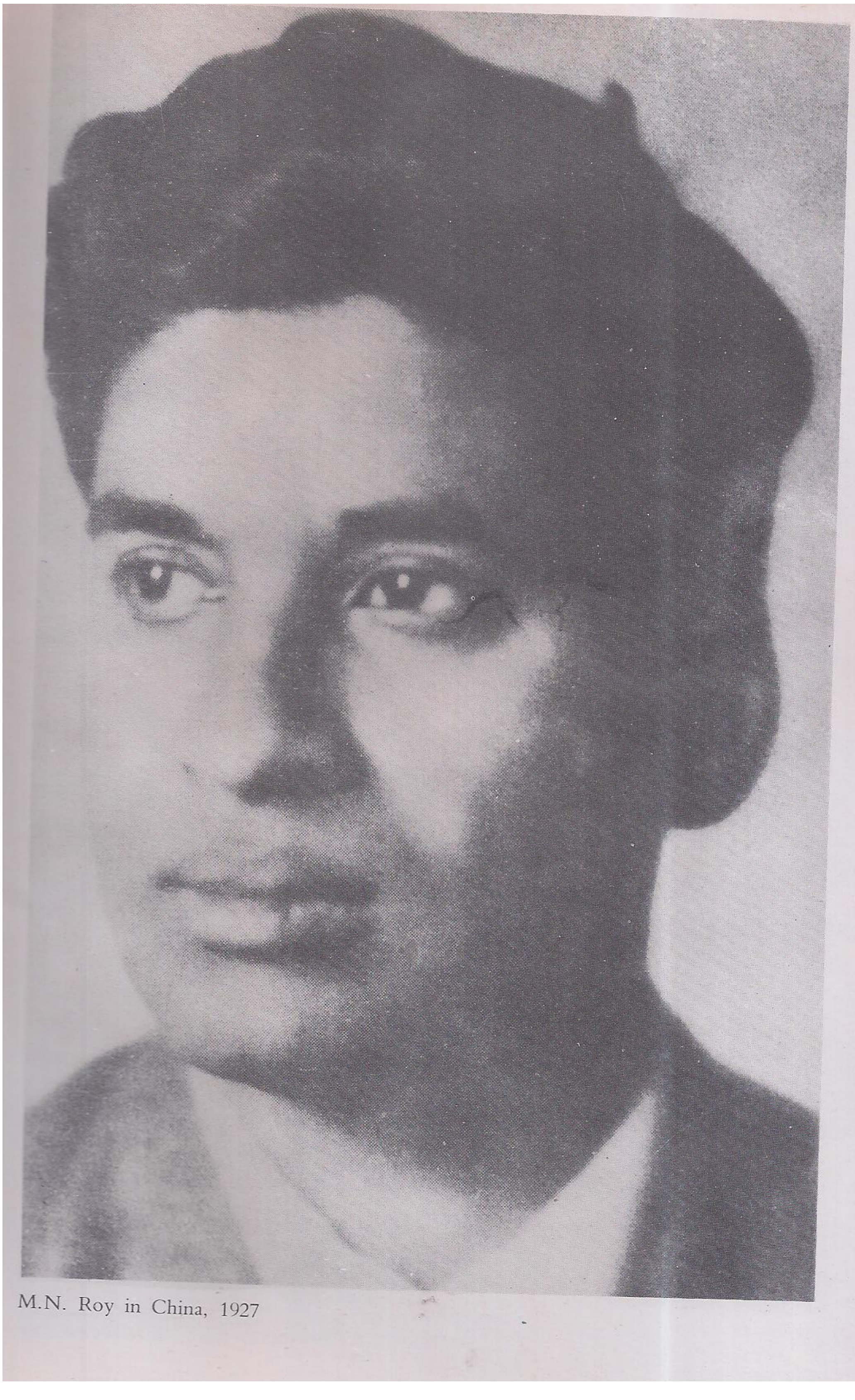
POINT OF VIEW
OF THE MASSES

The movement for Indian liberation became a mass movement in the aftermath of the Great Imperialist War. Up till then, Indian Nationalism was confined within the narrow limit of the middle classes—the upper strata of the society remaining loyal to the British Governent, and the submerged 95 per cent in passive ubmission. British domination in India rests upon two pillars : one, the loyal support of the nded aristocracy, together with others whose sted interests require the protection of "law d order", and the other the fatalist passivity the dumb millions. The first, being the nscious calculated faithfulness of a [illegible] landlord, his officials, the money-lender, country-trader, etc., etc. This passive faith remained unbroken, because education, civic right and other agencies that could make the peasant masses conscious of their exploitation, were denied by the foreign ruler.

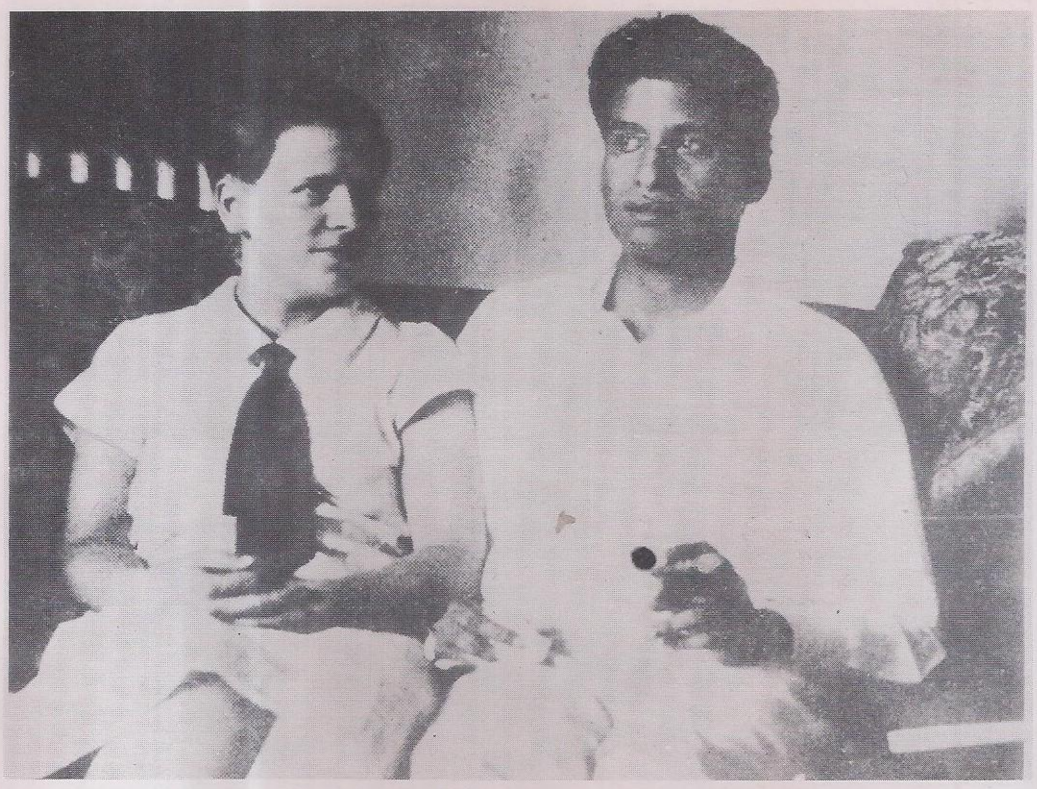
The economic effects of the war precipitated a change in this situation. The urban working-class, together with the rural population, was caught into a sudden whirlwind of discontent, which was presently focussed upon the political field by means of the Non-cooperation Movement. By its genesis, the Non-cooperation campaign was a mass movement. Its mass composition raised it far above the low level of the previous nationalist movement, and gave it a formidable appearance. But the voice of the masses was soon drowned in the ocean of metaphysical ab-

The Masses of India, January, 1925

Chiang Kai-Shek with
Sun Yat-Sen (seated), 1924



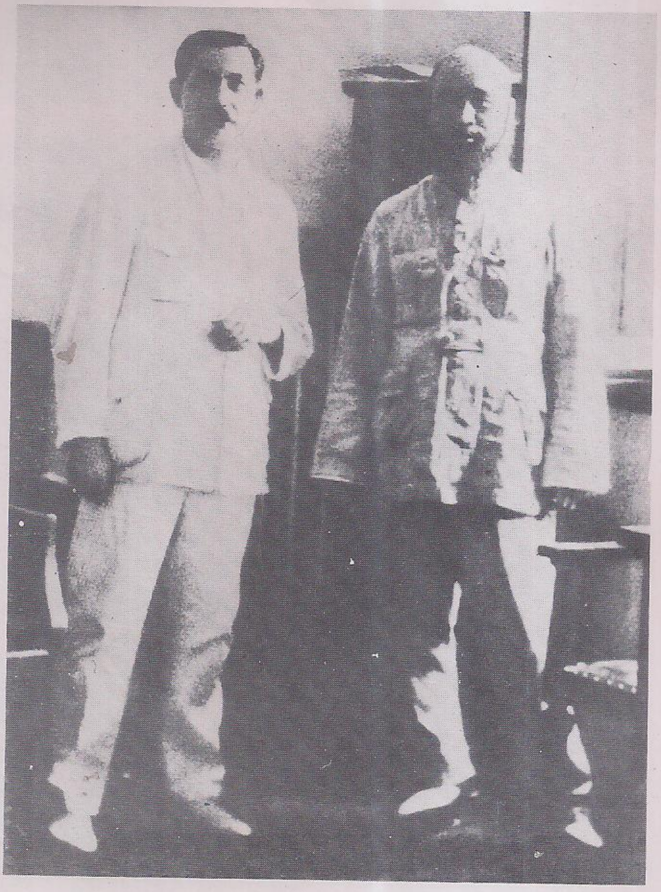
M.N. Roy in China, 1927



Roy with Louise Geissler in Hankow, 1927

Roy, General Bluecher and Louise Geissler, Hankow, 1927

Ch'en Tu-Hsiu



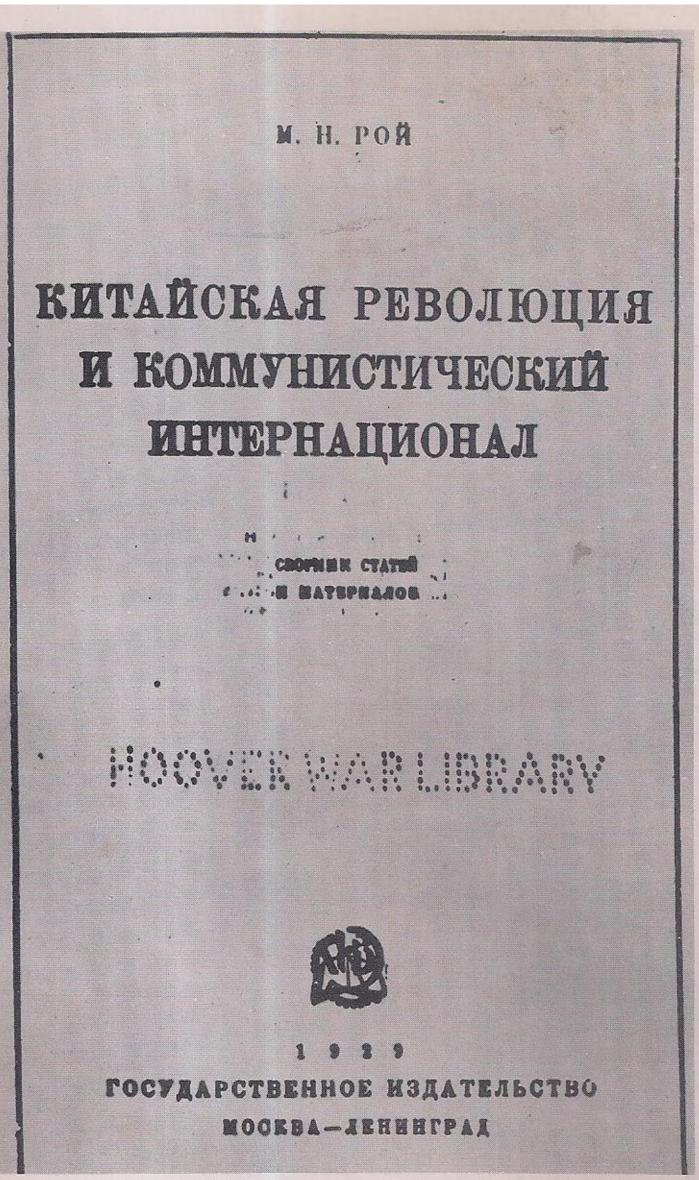
Michael Borodin in China

Wang Ching-Wei, 1927

Mao Tse-Tung, 1920

M.N. Roy at Soviet Consulate, Canton, 1927

M.N. Roy returning from China, August, 1927



М. Н. РОЙ

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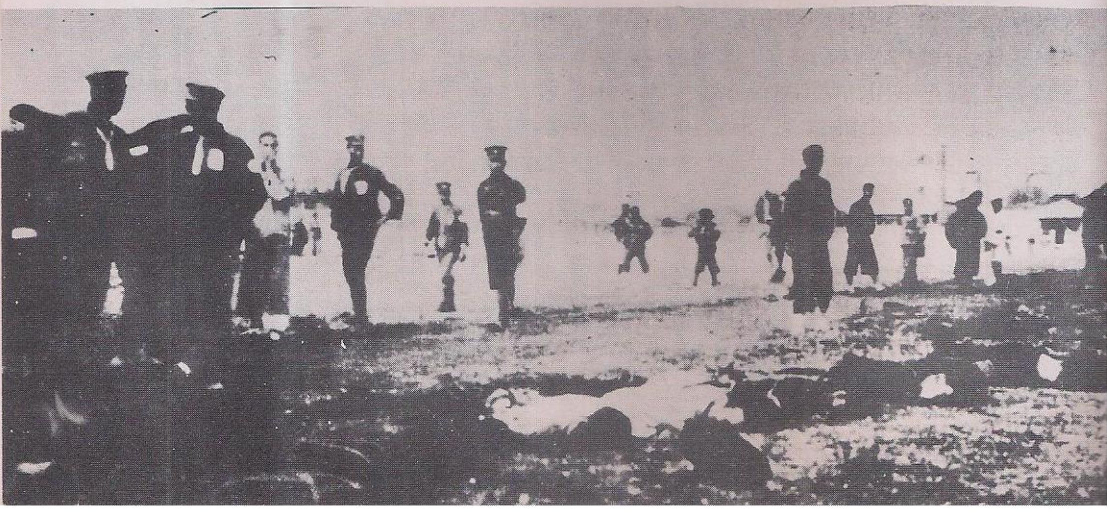
Corpses on Canton roads



PART III

A REAL NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

CHAPTER TWELVE

The New Basis of the National Struggle

The big bourgeoisie is practically eliminated from the struggle for national freedom. The bourgeois bloc of Bombay propose to fight not so much the bureaucracy as any revolutionary tendency in the Nationalist movement. They have declared war even on the harmless stage-thunders of Swarajism. Practically, the bourgeois bloc seeks to make a united front with the imperialist forces of law and order to make the country safe against any possible revolution. The middle class, which still makes the show of a parliamentary fight, is in hopeless political bankruptcy. Economic understanding between British imperialism and Indian capitalism has taken the wind out of the sails of bourgeois Nationalism under which the Swaraj Party has been steering its course. The future of Indian politics (of national liberation) will, therefore, be determined by the social forces which still remain and will always remain antagonistic to Imperialism even in the new era dominated by the 'higher ideals of Swaraj within the Empire'. These social forces are composed of the workers, peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie (small traders, artisans, employees, students, petty intellectuals, etc.). In the new era of compromise and agreement the economic conditions of these classes will not be essentially improved. On the contrary, they will become worse. The agreement between Indian capitalism and British imperialism is made on the basis of the latter's permitting the former a larger and more direct share in the proceeds of exploitation of the Indian masses. In making this 'concession', imperialism has taken all precautions against a substantial reduction of its share.

The share of the Indian bourgeoisie will be increased by a corresponding increase in the surplus value produced by the Indian working masses. In addition to the enormous tribute to imperialism, the burden of contributing to greater and more rapid enrichment of the native bourgeoisie will then also fall upon the bent back of the Indian workers and peasants. The Indian capitalists do not make any secret of this prospect either. They frankly declare that in order to secure 'national prosperity'—by which they mean the prosperity of their class—it will be necessary for the people to make sacrifices. While making a strong plea for the protection of Indian industries, the minority of the Fiscal Commission (composed of four leading Indian capitalists and one Nationalist politician) in their Note of Dissent wrote:

> 'We recognize that in the efforts to attain a prominent position in the industrial world, India will have to pay a price. The economic well-being of India which we aim at in the tariff policy which we recommend cannot be obtained without making a sacrifice.'

Protective tariffs not only increase the price of commodities on which the tax is levied, they cause a corresponding rise in the price of similar articles produced in the country. Besides, a sympathetic rise in prices results all around. This means that in the era of protectionism, the consuming public (majority of the population) will be obliged to contribute towards the enrichment of the small class of capitalists who will derive the profit from the industries developing behind high tariff walls. Industrial prosperity is likely to cause a rise in wages eventually. But the rise in wages will be more than compensated by a greater rise in prices. The real wages, therefore, will steadily go down.

The peasantry will be obliged to pay higher prices for agricultural implements, clothing and other manufactured necessities, while, owing to the shrinkage of the foreign market, the prices of agricultural produce will go down. Extension of the Indian market for manufactured articles at the same time will require a prosperous peasantry. Agricultural productivity must be increased in general. Productivity of land cannot be raised unless the present primitive system of cultivation is replaced by modern methods. But the existing land tenure stands in the way of this improvement. Cultivation of land cannot be modernized unless there is a class of peasantry in secure possession of sufficiently large areas of land. This readjustment in landholding will be obviously at the expense of the poor peasantry who are at present tenants-at-will with no proprietary right in the soil. A process of selection will be introduced in agriculture as a result of the industrialization of the country. More attention will be devoted to the growth of raw materials required by manufacturing industries. This will create the need for large-scale farming. Land will be gradually concentrated not as at present in the hands of speculators and moneylenders, who usually leave the cultivator on the soil, but in capitalist farms where the former 'independent' cultivators will be reduced to wage-slaves. The totality of agricultural production will be raised, the internal market will be extended, by driving the small peasantry off the land—by expropriation. Concentration of land will be caused by the expropriation of the small peasantry.

The artisans will be visited by further destruction of their means of livelihood. If the handicrafts suffered so heavily in competition with machine industry situated thousands of miles away, the destruction will be extremely greater and quicker when the same agency will operate on the spot. The destruction of craft industry will ruin the numerous small traders connected with this industry. Extension of banking facilities, so much demanded by the Indian bourgeoisie, will draw the rural trade more under the grip of urban capital and the small independent trader will be squeezed out of existence in consequence.

The prospect of the lower middle class and the petty intellectuals is not any brighter. They will have to bear the burden of heavy indirect taxation in the shape of higher prices, rents and travelling costs Nothing is held out to them in return. The promised facilities for technical education will convert a small section of the younger generation into industrial wage-slaves. The problematical Indianization of the army will only give them the opportunity to pledge the younger generation to the defence of a system that at best will keep them ever on the verge of economic ruin and moral degradation. The petty intellectuals in India are thoroughly proletarianized. They are an over-produced commodity thrown in ever-increasing numbers on the glutted market. A proletarianized class can save itself only through a social revolution—by the radical change of the political-economic system that has caused their proletarianization.

British imperialism has adopted the policy of industrialized India in order to tap the unlimited reserves of labour power. The produce of metropolitan industries no longer enables British capitalism to hold its own in the world market—particularly the markets of the east. To compete successfully with its rivals, British capitalism must place cheap goods in the market. This can only be done by harnessing the sources of cheap labour. Therefore, industrialization of India, which will provide the Indian bourgeoisie the coveted place in the sun, will intensify the exploitation of the Indian proletariat. Unpaid labour being the basis of capitalism, capitalist development of India will cause a great exploitation of the Indian working class. Since the future of British imperialism depends upon its success in profiting by the cheap labour of the Indian proletariat, it will keep the working class to the lowest subsistence level. The entire power of the State will be used for this purpose. The Indian bourgeoisie will be a willing party to the violent exploitation and suppression, because their prosperity also depends on what the workers will produce without getting any return. In short, in the era of 'equal partnership' the insatiable greed of British imperialism and Indian capitalism will be satisfied at the expense of the proletariat.

Therefore, the agreement between imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie does not by any means liquidate the struggle for national independence. Indeed, it pushes the struggle towards more revolutionary forms. The social basis of the Nationalist movement is shifted to the classes which have nothing in common with imperialism—which have nothing to lose but their chains of political slavery and economic exploitation. Class-struggle—the struggle between the propertied and expropriated classes—clearly becomes the motive force of Indian politics.

Now arise the questions of organization and leadership of these forces. Which of the three classes involved will assume the leading role in the fight? What organizational form will the struggle adopt?

Both the leadership and organizational form will naturally be determined by the social character of the movement. The social elements that will henceforth compose the movement for national liberation are the petty intellectuals, artisans, small traders, peasantry and the proletariat. In the existing condition of Indian society, these all belong to the oppressed and exploited class. The movement for national liberation will take place on the basis of the struggle between the exploiting and exploited classes. Henceforth the fight for national freedom in India becomes a class-struggle approximating to the final stage.

Class-struggle is not always a struggle between the exploiter and exploited. It is so only in its last stages. In the earlier stages it is not a prelude to the abolition of class-ridden society. It simply expresses the antagonism of a rising class to the old dominating class. It simply causes a transformation of property relationship—one class replaces another class as the dominating social factor. In its final stage the nature of the class-struggle entirely changes. It ceases to be the struggle between two forms of property. It becomes the prelude to the abolition of private property and the foundation of the socialist order of society. On the one side of the line stands capitalism as the quintessence of private ownership, and on the other is marshalled the proletarian army which by its very nature does not represent a new form of property. The victory of the latter, therefore, leads to the reorganization of human society, free from class domination. With the disappearance of property-right, classes disappear.

Although the class-struggle in the contemporary Indian society has not arrived at the very last stage, it approximates that stage so much as to have the proletariat at its head. But at the same time, the majority of forces involved in the struggle objectively do not stand for the total abolition of property. They are exploited, expropriated; nevertheless; their victory will not be a socialist victory, but a popular democratic victory. So the proletariat is called upon to lead a movement for democratic freedom, which movement, however, will have a preponderating character of class-struggle in the last stage. The proletariat will have the hegemony in the struggle for democracy. The objective programme of the proletariat (Socialist Programme) will not be imposed on the movement, but the hegemony of the proletariat will inspire the struggle with the most advanced revolutionary democratic ideals, as distinguished from the hypocritical bourgeois democracy. Democracy is the end in itself for the class which converts the democratic State into an instrument of its domination. From the proletarian point of view it is a means—a step towards Socialism. Therefore, if necessary, as in India, and as has been in Russia, the proletariat should assume the hegemony in the struggle for democratic freedom. Whether the democratic revolution can be quickly transformed into a Socialist Revolution (as in Russia) remains an open question depending upon the class-relations in the particular society and on the political maturity of the proletariat. What is conclusive is that on the failure of the bourgeoisie to lead the democratic revolution, the proletariat becomes the leaven of the democratic movement, and will exercise the hegemony in the struggle for democratic freedom. When, as in India, the bourgeoisie betray their historic trust, the movement for democratic freedom becomes a class struggle approximating the last stage. As a matter of fact, the bourgeoisie desert and betray the struggle for democratic freedom whenever the conception of democratic freedom in the least threatens to transgress the narrow confines of capitalist parliamentarism and approximates the freedom of class domination. History is full of examples of such desertion and betrayal. The democratic movement headed by the bourgeoisie is a struggle for power between two classes representing two different forms of property. But a democratic movement, which goes on in spite of the betrayal of the bourgeoisie, represents the classes that are essentially exploited and expropriated, although some of them are identified with some form of property. Petty bourgeois property, however, is not a newer and more developed form of property as against the capitalist system. On the contrary, it is a form of property that is bound to be eliminated by the development of capitalist production. Therefore the antagonism between capitalism and petty bourgeois ownership does not belong to that category of class-struggle which is between two forms of property. It is essentially a skirmish on the outskirts of the arena where the final battle will be fought. This being the case, a democratic struggle whose social basis embraces the petty bourgeoisie (including the peasantry) is bound to be under proletarian hegemony. Being essentially linked up with the last stage of the class struggle, it is inevitably influenced by the leader of that struggle. Therefore, the proletariat will have the hegemony in the Indian struggle for national freedom in the coming phase.

The next question is, how will the movement be organized? In what formation should the democratic forces be marched in the battle? To play creditably its political role, the proletariat will, of course, have its own party—the Communist Party. But in that there will be no room for its democratic allies. The party of the proletariat stands under the banner of Socialism. On the way to the ultimate goal, the proletarian party may be required to fight for non-Socialist democratic demands. But it always remains a Socialist (Communist) Party. Its final programme is a Socialist (Communist) programme.

The allies of the proletariat, however, are not just now fighting for Socialism. They, therefore, cannot be in a party which objectively stands for Socialism, though taking part, even leading, non-socialist democratic movements as steps forward. Hence arises the necessity of a party in which the proletariat stand side by side (as a vanguard) with the revolutionary Nationalist elements fighting for democratic freedom. None of the existing Nationalist parties can serve the purpose. The Liberal and the Independent Nationalist parties have never pretended to be anything but the political instrument of the bourgeoisie. Such pretension came from the Swarajists. But the completely capitalist character of the Swaraj Party—as led and constituted at present—has been demonstrated. There are large petty bourgeois elements in that party. These elements, however, can no longer stay in the party which has so completely betrayed the interests of their class. They must either assert themselves to transform the party into a revolutionary democratic party of the people or leave the party. The Swaraj Party does not stand for a democratic revolution, as its programme and record of activities clearly indicate. For all practical purposes it has even abandoned all effective opposition to the foreign bureaucracy. The Party has split under the pressure of class contradictions. The section consciously representing bourgeois interests has broken away. But the party still remains a bourgeois Nationalist party. The social composition of the party—the objective demands of its members and adherents—calls for a programme entirely different from the old programme of the party. The organizational structure of the party must also be changed. A party apparatus adapted only to parliamentary activities cannot be the suitable political organ of the unfranchised masses. Owing to the essentially capitalist nature of its programme, and the limitation of its activities to the narrow parliamentary field, a major portion of the popular democratic forces stood outside the Swaraj Party. The union of these forces with the similar element inside the Swaraj Party will convert the Swaraj Party into a national revolutionary party of the people. The first event in the future of Indian politics will be the crystallization of such a party.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Labour Party

From several quarters comes the proposition for the organization of a Labour Party. As a matter of fact, efforts have been made to organize an Indian Labour Party. All these efforts so far have miscarried. On the face of it, the proposition is not the result of a mature study of the situation. Fundamentally, it does not correspond to the Indian conditions.

First of all, the nature of the task should be defined unequivocally. The organization of a proletarian party is not the question in issue here. The proletariat must have its own party. The analysis of the situation, however, reveals the imperativeness of a political organization apart from the party of the proletariat. What is needed is not a change in the nomenclature of the proletarian party, but a democratic party which will be the rallying ground for all the revolutionary social elements, including the proletariat. Obviously a Labour Party will not meet the situation. As its name indicates, the Labour Party will be the party only of the working class.

Indeed, a Labour Party will not even be the political party of the Indian proletariat. The conditions for the growth of a Labour Party do not exist in India. A Labour Party on the British model (the advocates of an Indian Labour Party are all in favour of imitating the British model) must have for its basis fairly developed trade unions. These are not to be found in India. So, in India, under the present conditions a Labour Party will be an extraneous growth artificially brought into being. The politics of a Labour Party is the politics of trade unionism and parliamentarism. Indian trade unions are not yet developed enough to give rise to a particular type of political party. Besides, to discharge the political role that devolves upon the Indian proletariat in the immediate future, the scope of their activities should be much wider. A Labour Party of the British model is a parliamentary body. Its programme is to have the grievances of the working class redressed through acts of parliament. Its ultimate object is to capture the State machinery by means of a parliamentary majority. For our present purpose it is not necessary to challenge this programme on its merits. It is sufficient to point out that there cannot be parliamentarism in a country without a parliament. In India the proletariat must take a leading part in the fight for the establishment of democratic government. A form of political organization that may supposedly be useful for the proletariat in a country with a democratic constitution, cannot be applicable to a country without the rudimentary element of democratic freedom.

The advocates of a Labour Party in India represent the tendency of 'Economism'. They maintain that the Indian proletariat are still too immature, too unorganized, too uneducated for any political action; that they should let politics alone, organize themselves one hundred per cent, in trade unions, and improve their economic conditions by collective bargaining. This is a totally erroneous point of view. It is an attempt to detach the proletariat from the struggle for national freedom.

To act along this line would not only be harmful to the proletariat, but dangerous to the entire Nationalist movement. As already pointed out, combinations of historic events have imposed upon the Indian proletariat a very important, indeed decisive, role in the movement for national freedom and democratization of the country. The fight of the proletariat even for the most elementary, immediate economic demands (wages, hours, conditions of labour, etc.), is closely bound up with the struggle for national and democratic freedom. The basis of imperialism is the economic exploitation of the colonial working class. In proportion as the standard of living of the colonial working class rises, the foundation of imperialism is undermined. The object of colonial domination is to keep the standard of living of the native working class down to such a level as to guarantee a substantial margin of super profit. Therefore, no real improvement in the economic conditions of the Indian proletariat can be realized before the political domination of Britain is overthrown; that is, until national independence is attained and a democratic regime is established. There is antagonism between imperialist interests and the interests of the entire Indian people; but the antagonism between imperialism and the Indian working class (including the peasantry) is irreconcilable. The proceeds of colonial plunder are produced by the labouring classes. The other classes of the native population are oppressed in so far as they are deprived of the major portion of the value produced by the labouring masses. There is a community of interest between the native possessing classes and foreign rulers in that they both benefit (though unequally) by the exploitation of the working class. Thus, while the relation between the native possessing classes and imperialism is that of rivalry, which can be readjusted in a critical moment, the interests of the Indian proletariat and British imperialism are mutually exclusive. The existence and welfare of one depends upon the ruin of the other. The Indian proletariat, therefore, cannot retire from the struggle for national freedom without strengthening its own chains. It must stand in the vanguard of the struggle for democratic national freedom. The first and foremost task of the Indian proletariat is to secure national independence and democratization of the country. Every act in defence and furtherance of the most elementary economic right of the Indian proletariat is essentially political for it is directed against the foundation of British domination. This being the case, the theory that the Indian working class should organize itself in trade unions on the basis of collective bargaining and in a reformist Labour Party of the British model is erroneous. It is worse; it misleads and betrays the Indian proletariat.

The first attempt for organizing a Labour Party in India was made in 1920, simultaneously with the forming of the Trade Union Congress. The Trade Union Congress was not a spontaneous growth. In 1920 the Trade Unions in India were in embryonic forms. They were practically strike committees. The idea of an Indian Trade Union Congress was conceived by a few intellectuals, and supported by the British Labour Party. The latter deputed Colonel Wedgwood and Ben Spoor to canvass the idea of a Labour Party in India. They attended the first Trade Union Congress held in Bombay under the presidency of Lajpat Rai. The desire to promote the projects of the Trade Union Congress and Labour Party was caused by the anxiety of the British Labour imperialists to detach the Indian proletariat from the post-war revolutionary upheaval which had asumed positively alarming proportions in 1919–20. The artificiality of the whole scheme was revealed by the fact that meeting in a period when the whole country was in the midst of a revolutionary turmoil, the Trade Union Congress was presided over by a bourgeois politician with no sympathy for Socialism, attended by a score of Liberal intellectuals of humanitarian inclination, and patronised by the emissaries of Labour imperialism. It was singularly unconnected with the revolutionary Labour movement sweeping the country with a series of political mass strikes. A resolution to send delegates to the Communist International was summarily rejected. The Trade Union Congress did not concern itself with the Nationalist agitation which was in high tide, sweeping the working masses in its whirling course. On the contrary, it submissively listened to its patron saint, Colonel Wedgwood, denounce the non-cooperation movement. Had the Trade Union Congress been the conscious vanguard of the Young India proletariat, it should have plunged into the great revolutionary mass movement in order to snatch its leadership from the faltering and treacherous hand of petty bourgeois pacifists.

Nothing more was heard of the Labour Party until February 1923, when the Third Trade Union Congress met. By that time the Trade Union Congress had become more unreal—a totally non-working class-body existing only in name. Nevertheless, on the agenda of the Congress stood a resolution recommending the formation of a Labour Party. The Congress was presided over by the late C. R. Das, and attended by a strong detachment of Nationalist politicians. It was more of a social gathering than a political meeting. It was well depicted in an article by its Secretary, Chaman Lal, who wrote: 'The delegates, an imposing galaxy of respectable ladies and gentlemen, rolled up in rows of luxuriant motor cars'. In the midst of that respectable and luxurious gathering, all was forgotten about the unwashed millions. The Nationalist politicians, who dominated the Congress, vetoed the project of a Labour Party.

The project was again revived in the beginning of 1925 when the new acquisition of the Independent Labour Party, Oswald Mosley, visited India. He is reported to have broached the question with several Nationalist politicians closely related to and possessing the confidence of the British Labour Party. In the first week of February, while the Legislative Assembly was in session, a number of Nationalist parliamentarians met at Delhi under the presidency again of Lajpat Rai to discuss the project of forming a Labour Party. The president delivered himself of the following sentiments: that the promoters of the scheme should not be impatient; that they should devote themselves to spade-work—to study facts and figures about the economic life of India; that loose talk about Communism and Internationalism should be discouraged; and that an inopportune pressing of the Labour point of view would help the foreign capitalists. N. M. Joshi, government-nominated Labour member of the Legislative Assembly, declared: 'We should prefer an Indian capitalist to a British one'. Nothing more practical materialized. The project remained in abeyance. A few months later it was reported in the Press that Lajpat Rai had joined the I.L.P. and was trying to organize an Indian branch of that party. It is not known if the I.L.P. has had more success in India than the Labour Party, except that Sir Sankeran Nair, an ex-high official, has swelled its thin ranks. Sir Sankeran is a particular pet of the ruling clique of the Labour Party. Attempts were being made to give the seat of the Communist Saklatvala to him in the last elections.

Towards the end of the year (1925) missionaries of British Labourism invaded India with more determination than ever. The crusade was headed by a retired army officer gone Labour, Major Graham Pole. As the president of a railway employees' conference at Tanjore, he outlined the programme of the future Indian Labour Party in the form of advice to the working class. His advice was to support the Commonwealth of India Bill (a scheme of constitutional reform based upon the agreement between British Imperialism and Indian capital) and to demand the right to send workers' representatives to the various legislatures to promote working class interests. Finally, he said: 'Labour in India should be careful not to ally itself with Communism. What is being preached in Moscow is anarchy itself, and against such counsels Indian Labour should be warned'. The speaker further expressed his intention to form an Indian branch of the Fabian Society.

So, it is clear under what auspices a Labour Party will be born in India, if indeed it ever sees the light of life. The most important aspect of the subject is, however, that in spite of the repeated efforts made by men having influence over Indian politics and fully backed by the British Labour Party, the project does not materialize. There has not been any opposition from the Government. There must, therefore, be fundamental reasons which prevent the rise of a Labour Party in India.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Conditions for a Labour Party

Judging from the attempts made, the projected Indian Labour Party will be of the British type. But the contemporary Indian conditions are not similar to the conditions in Britain when the Labour Party was organized. A similar political organization can only be produced by similar social-economic conditions. The British Labour Party was born in a period of imperialist expansion which caused great industrial and trade prosperity at home. The depression following the defeat of Chartism was broken by trade unionist activities led by an aristocracy of labour, which came into being as a by-product of the prosperity created by colonial plunder. Collective bargaining was the programme of the British Labour movement in that epoch. It was on the basis of that non-revolutionary trade unionism that the British Labour Party was built.

The British Trade Union Congress, which ultimately found its political expression in the Labour Party, proved impenetrable for the socialist ideas propagated by the Social Democratic Federation, the Independent Labour Party, &c. John Burns reproached it for having forgotten how to fight and having made peace, or even having concluded an alliance with capitalism. In a manifesto addressed to the Trades Union Congress in 1884, the Social Democratic Federation wrote: 'The trade unions unhappily only thought of improving the social position of the more favoured few affiliated to their body, and they are blind to the misery of the masses. They failed to see that it was not improvement but revolution that was wanted. The raising of wages and shortening of hours were the loftiest things for which they strove.'

In the later 'eighties and 'nineties of the last century, when the theoretical foundation of the future Labour Party was laid, the British Constitution had become fully democratic (bourgeois). The proletariat had obtained the franchise. The Trade Union Acts of the 'seventies were regarded by the labour aristocracy as the charter of social and economic freedom. In such a situation the Fabianism of Sidney Webb naturally proved more captivating than the revolutionary Socialism preached in the earlier periods of fierce competition, enormous accumulation and non-democratic constitution. The theoretical basis of the Labour Party was, that in a democratic society, and in a State which recognized the necessity of Social legislation, there was no need for a revolution; that new political institutions for the defence of the working class interests were not to be created—they were in existence to be used effectively by the working class for systematic social reform. The Fabians maintained that at the close of the nineteenth century, Britain possessed a fully democratic State; that the problem was not to secure more political power for the working class, but to persuade the entire working class to make constructive use of the power they already possessed.

The conditions in India are totally different. They are not at all the kind in which the British Labour Party grew, nor are the Fabian theories applicable to them. A democratic constitution and labour legislation, which enabled the British labour aristocracy to divert the proletarian masses from the way of Socialism to that of Reformism, are still to be attained in India. The conditions are rather analogous to the British conditions in the decades preceding and following the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. They objectively make for Chartism rather than orthodox trade unionism and reformist parliamentarism. Trade unionist politics of focussing the entire energy of the proletariat on immediate economic issues are not suitable in a period when the proletariat must stand at the van of a democratic revolutionary movement. Yet the Indian Trade Union Congress is dominated by that tendency, and a Labour Party which presumably will be based on the Trade Union Congress will unavoidably go the same way. The form of political organization developed by the proletariat of one country in the period of prosperity and possessing constitutional freedom, cannot be applicable to another country in the earlier stages of capitalist development and deprived of elementary political rights.

Owing to the fact that the objective conditions for a Labour Party do not obtain in India, the tendency of 'Economism'—trade unionist politics—does not originate in the ranks of the proletariat. It is an artificial growth, having for its basis, on the one hand, the native element of intellectual careerism, and, on the other hand, the machinations of British Labour Imperialism. We have no aristocracy of labour. Indian conditions do not permit the growth of a labour aristocracy. The endeavour to corrupt the Labour movement with the politics of orthodox trade unionism and premature parliamentarianism are made by non-proletarian, non-socialist elements. Of late the tendency has even been officially fomented. This indicates how dangerous such politics will be for the Indian Labour movement and for the entire democratic movement for national liberation. Politics of trade unionism and of Parliamentarism (in the absence of Parliament) in India are advocated by non-socialist intellectuals, bourgeois humanitarians, kept (by Government) Labour leaders, and agents of British Labour Imperialism. An Indian Labour Party, granted that it can be organized in spite of the fact that objective conditions are against it, will be controlled by these elements. Therefore, it will never be the party of the Indian proletariat. The Indian Trade Union Congress, which presumably will be the basis of the projected Labour Party, is shaped entirely on the British model, although Indian trade unions are separated from the British unions by a period of half a century. The contemporary social and political position of the Indian proletariat does in no way correspond to that of the British proletariat in the period when the Trade Union Congress was organized in Britain. While the organizers and leaders of the British Trade Union Congress all rose from the ranks of better-paid skilled workers, the promoters of the Indian Trade Union Congress are non-proletarian politicians. Nor are the latter revolutionary Socialists—'professional revolutionaries'—the importance of which element in the earlier stages of the proletarian movement has been so much emphasized by Lenin. The present politics of the Indian Trade Union Congress is an imbecile mimicry which might be immensely harmful, if the revolutionary leaders of the proletariat fail to fight it. It is misleading the small section of the proletariat which has been drawn under its influence. In its last annual session, held in Madras, the Trade Union Congress decided that arbitration in the industrial field and representation in the legislative bodies (based upon a franchise embracing less than 2 per cent of the population) should be the means to defend the economic interests of the proletariat. In the broader political domain it subscribed to the bourgeois Nationalist programme of Self-government within the British Empire. A Labour Party built on such a basis will be the last thing that the contemporary social and political situation in India demands.

It may be argued that a Labour Party in India need not be an epitome of the British Labour Party. It will be a very superficial argument. A Labour Party is a form of political organization dominated by certain distinct political tendencies. In India it cannot be freed from that tendency without rendering it something other than a Labour Party. This has been proved by the fact that all the attempts so far made for the organization of a Labour Party in India have tended clearly to copy the British model, and have been inspired by adulterated Fabianism. The above argument will evidently imply that a Labour Party should be organized in India independently of the efforts so far made by elements of opportunism. In that case it will only be a question of name. The (revolutionary) party of the proletariat will be called a Labour Party. Why this nominal variation? Why clothe the revolutionary teachings of Marx and Lenin in the respectable garb of Sydney Webb? With a different name the proletarian party will not be able to accommodate inside it non-proletarian classes, namely, the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Besides, theoretically, a Labour Party cannot be the suitable weapon in the revolutionary fight for democratic freedom. If it is intended to deceive the Public Prosecutor, the trick will not work. As soon as it will act as the party of the proletariat should act, in the given situation, that is, openly take its place in the forefront of the democratic forces fighting under a revolutionary programme (including the overthrow of imperialist domination and establishment of a democratic republic), the name will not save the party, unless it can defend itself by more powerful means. If the Party does not act as the vanguard of the forces of national liberation, it will not be a party of the proletariat in spite of the name.

So, an Indian Labour Party will be, firstly, an artificial creation without vital connection with and not representing the proletarian masses; and secondly, it will be inevitably on the British model which does not suit the Indian conditions. It will be neither here nor there. It will not be the party of the proletariat, nor will it be the common platform for all the democratic social forces. Its very name (not to mention its reformist theories) will alienate the petty bourgeoisie, which must fight under the banner of Nationalism. On the other hand, its trade unionist policies will draw the proletariat further and further from the fight for national freedom.

The task of the Indian proletariat in the immediate future is not to bargain with the imperialist and national bourgeoisie for the removal of immediate economic grievances. It is political, of a very comprehensive nature. It is to rally under the banner of national liberation all the oppressed classes of contemporary Indian society. Undoubtedly the proletariat will fight for their economic demands; but they should not have the illusion that anything substantial can be gained in that sphere without a radical change in the political system. In quest of petty economic reforms the proletariat should not go away from their democratic allies. Yet, this is precisely what the Labour Party will ask the proletariat to do.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The People's Party and the Proletariat

The people's fight for freedom must be led by the party of the people—a party organization which will be broad enough for all the forces of national revolution. The proletariat will be in it, but it will not be a proletarian party, nominally or essentially. In this party the proletariat will stand side by side with the petty bourgeois and peasant masses, as the most advanced democratic class. The petty bourgeoisie, disillusioned by the treachery of capitalist Nationalism, are gravitating towards the formation of a revolutionary political organization to carry the fight for freedom further. But the petty bourgeoisie are incapable of independent political action. Their revolutionary discontent often deviates into the futile channels of conspirative terrorism. The decline of bourgeois Nationalism has given a new impetus to the terrorist organizations. At the same time, the tendency of 'going to the masses' is gaining ground among the Nationalist intellectuals of advanced views. This tendency has of late manifested itself in attempts to form revolutionary political organizations, essentially Nationalist, but nominally proletarian or peasant. Naturally, this new orientation towards the working masses is either utopian or very superficial—not based on a thorough grasp of the situation. Nevertheless, it is evident that the petty bourgeois intellectuals are feeling their 'way to the masses'. They are beginning to understand that the revolutionary fight for national freedom cannot be organized without the active participation of the working masses, and that the latter cannot be rallied under the banner of freedom unless the movement for that freedom is based on a revolutionary democratic programme reflecting the interests of the oppressed classes. This radicalization of their social outlook will not lead the petty bourgeois intellectuals straight inside the ranks of a proletarian party. Nor is it desirable that the party of the proletariat should be flooded with non-proletarian elements, even though they take on a Socialist or Communist complexion. The radicalization of the petty bourgeois intellectuals—the search for the way to the masses—indicates differentiation in the ranks of bourgeois Nationalism. The political consequences of this differentiation will be the organization of a petty bourgeois Nationalist Party with the programme of a fight to the finish against Imperialist domination and of democratic republicanism. The crystallization of forces in this direction is not only to be noticed in the petty bourgeois ranks of the National Congress, but also in the Left Wing of the Swaraj Party. The consciously bourgeois leaders of the Congress as well as of the Swaraj Party have all along suppressed this revolutionary tendency. For example, in the successive annual sessions of the Congress in the last years, the resolution for the change of the aim of the National Congress from undefined self-government (lately defined as self-government within the British Empire) to complete independence, secured an increasing number of votes. In fact, the majority of the rank and file would have given the resolution a majority, had the leading machinery not been put into motion to suppress it. In 1924, the resolution got a majority in the Subjects Committee; but Gandhi, as the president, ruled out its introduction in the plenary session of the Congress. Many provincial conferences adopted resolutions recommending such a change in the Congress programme; but, to the contrary, the aim of the National Congress was clearly defined as self-government within the British Empire last year, and once more emphasized this year. This has created great dissatisfaction among the rank and file. Even in the Swaraj Party, several important members have publicly condemned the 'capitalist outlook of the party', and declared that the 'party conspired with the vested interests to betray the people'. These markedly revolutionary tendencies are bound to crystallize into a Party of Revolutionary Nationalism in the near future.

The task of the proletariat in this situation is to meet the petty bourgeois Nationalist revolutionaries half-way. Left alone, on their own initiative, the petty bourgeois radical intellectuals will never find their 'way to the masses'. They are still encumbered with traditional class prejudice which survives economic ruin and political servitude. The very complicated Indian system of land ownership gives the middle classes in several provinces a rather precarious share in the unearned income from land. As far as the lower strata of the middle classes are concerned, this share is an illusion—it does not save them from economic bankruptcy perpetually verging on starvation. Nevertheless, this meagre share in land rent has effectively prevented the petty bourgeoisie as a class from advocating any agrarian reform affecting the system of land ownership. Under such circumstances, the desire of the petty intellectuals 'to go to the masses' (Swarajist programme of village reconstruction) will not take them very near to the peasantry, unless they are drawn into the company of a more fundamentally revolutionary class—the proletariat. Since the petty bourgeoisie will not, and cannot, enter a real proletarian party, the proletariat must enter, even take the initiative of organizing a broader party. Ever since 1923, the Communists have kept before the country a programme of Revolutionary Nationalism. In spite of the joint efforts of Imperialism and the Nationalist bourgeoisie to condemn this programme as 'Bolshevism' and thereby terrify the petty bourgeois Nationalist, the fundamental principles of democracy, republicanism and agrarian revolution contained in that programme have enlisted numerous adherents. The slogan of a revolutionary peoples' party arouses wide response.

A democratic party of the people with a programme of Revolutionary Nationalism (complete independence, establishment of a republican government, radical agrarian reforms, advanced social legislation, etc.), will bind together all the oppressed classes of contemporary Indian society, namely, the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry, and the proletariat. Under the present conditions, the first two will constitute the overwhelming majority; but the proletariat will act as the conscious vanguard of the democratic army—as the leaven of life of the gigantic mass. In this revolutionary combine of the oppressed classes, the role of the petty bourgeois intellectuals cannot be overestimated. The proletariat will contribute the revolutionary driving forces; the peasantry will lend their massive weight; and the petty bourgeois intellectuals will bring in knowledge and education. Considering the cultural backwardness—general illiteracy—of the working class, an educated ally will be immensely valuable, provided that the intellectual accomplishments of that ally are devoted to quicken the revolutionary consciousness of the oppressed classes. Linked up with the proletariat in the actual and every-day fight, the petty bourgeois intellectuals will undergo an ever-quickening process of radicalization. They will demand more democratic freedom in such a revolutionary atmosphere than they would do alone. Pushed by the proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie will also go further towards agrarian revolution, thus drawing the peasant masses into the struggle for democratic national freedom.

For years India has been seething with growing agrarian discontent. But no political expression has been given to this revolutionary factor. A party of agrarian revolution, in the democratic sense, must appear as the organ through which the peasant masses will be actively drawn in the fight for national freedom. Such a Revolutionary Nationalist Party will fight under a programme of agrarian revolution. It will unite the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry in a democratic struggle under the leadership of the proletariat. It will be a party representing the majority of the people and actively supported by them. It will fight for popular freedom. It will be the People's Party.

The future of Indian politics will be an intensified fight for national liberation with revolutionary democratic ideals, under the standard of a people's party. The proletariat, led by its own party—the Communist Party—will exercise hegemony in this revolutionary struggle for democratic national freedom.

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How to organize a Working class Party	November 1926
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The Communal Strife*

The most outstanding and at the same time the most deplorable feature of the present situation in India is the communal strife. Communal riots are spreading all over the country. The black clouds of civil warfare which had first appeared in the north are enveloping the whole atmosphere. Hindus and Moslems are cutting each others' throats on slight provocation coming from one side or the other. The whole political and social atmosphere has been poisoned by the violent outburst of fanaticism of the most primitive kind. The common struggle against an alien government for the establishment of Swaraj has been thrown into the background. Parties are springing up not on healthy, political and economic bases, but on the grounds of 'communalism'.

The situation is very gloomy. The nationalist press recognizes it. The leaders of the Congress—at least those who have not been swept away by the rising tide of 'Communalism'—realize the gravity of the situation. At their best they ask the warring people to change their hearts as they have been imploring British imperialism to do. Nobody, it seems, is going to change hearts by requests or even ukases. That will not do. To get out of the impasse we should analyse the causes of the trouble so that the correct remedy may be discovered.

Causes

There is a class of people whose mission is to go on adding fuel to the fire. They keep up the conflagration of internecine strife to gain some definite political and economic ends. This class consists of the following elements: 1) Parasitic class of priests who masquerade as Maulanas and Mahatmas and whose influence among the masses tends to decrease in proportion as the country goes more and more through the capitalist exploitation. It is to their material interest to kindle and to feed the flames of religious fanaticism. Faced with the menace of unemployment, so to say, they are creating work for themselves. 2) Reactionary politicians who lost ground during the nationalist movement of non-cooperation. 3) Unemployed intelligentsia. The hitherto weak and less numerous Moslem intellectuals are struggling against their powerful Hindu rivals to get administrative posts in the country. 4) The petty bourgeois elements engaged in trading business in the towns and villages. Here again, the young Moslem bourgeoisie are entering into a keen competition with their strong Hindu compatriots. 5) Lumpen-proletariat and goondas who are used by the police to start the affray. They are paid for it.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II No. 10, October 1926. Unsigned article. SNR

All these people are interested in the communal fighting, because they aim at getting political and economic benefits thereby. The professional classes may look for seats in the legislatures on the 'communal' ticket, middle-class intellectuals for posts and offices, and a shopkeeper who cannot compete openly, for an exclusive market among his co-religionists. To achieve this end they have to make themselves popular in a way. They exploit the antagonism existing between the peasants and the money-lenders, between the cultivators and the landlords, between the workers and the capitalists and between the proletarianized intellectuals and their exploiters. The way in which the money-lenders' bill in the Punjab was made a communal issue shows how pure economic antagonism is directed into the wrong channels by the interested parties. The Malabar riots were objectively the expression of struggle of the peasantry against the landlords. In Bengal the riots have spread to the country where incidents of peasants refusing to pay taxes to the landlords have been reported. In the absence of a popular movement which could direct the discontent of the exploited people along sane and healthy political and economic lines and organize the peasantry and the workers for their political and economic emancipation, the evil forces are at work to inflame that discontent in the name of religion and in order to profit from it. Proselytization from one religion into another, playing of music before mosques, killing of cows, all these sources of dissension are not new phenomena in the life of the country. They existed before without plunging the country into such a disaster. These are not the causes but pretexts employed as useful instruments to inflame the minds of the people. None of these things touches the life of the masses at all. Does the playing of Hindu music affect the life of the Moslem peasants in any way? Will the stopping of cow-killing bring any prosperity to the Hindu cultivators? Nothing of the sort. The traditional reverence of the cow by the Hindu is exploited to rouse him against Mussulman beef-eaters, although all the Britishers who are there kill cows for food. Playing of music before mosques is only unpardonable and provocative when Hindus play it. A Moslem marriage procession passing a mosque with bands playing will not arouse anybody to anger.

The Hidden Hand

There is another agency which is interested to see that the civil war is kept going on. This is the hidden hand of Imperialism. All kinds of diplomatic and ingenious methods are used to encourage the communal strife, with a double purpose. Firstly to disrupt the nationalist movement which menaces the safety of the Empire, and secondly to supply another argument to justify the British domination. The imperialist press sketches harrowing and blood-curdling scenes of anarchy and bloodshed if the controlling power of the British bayonets is withdrawn. Incidentally, the bloodshed is going on now in spite of all those bayonets still in India.[1]

Imperialist diplomacy has always sought to maintain an ally in the task of subjugation, more so in times of popular nationalist movements. The history of Irish struggle has shown that a community in minority in the country can be easily exploited by crafty imperialists to gain their own ends. In India the Moslem community happens to be in minority. That is nothing in itself, if the Moslems and Hindus look upon themselves as Indians only. Unfortunately that is not the case at present, and whatever fears, imaginary or real, the Hindus may have from Pan-Islamism, the Moslems dread the Hindu majority in the prospective 'Swaraj'. This fear of the Moslems coupled with their backwardness in educational, political and economical development, has been more than once exploited by British imperialism. During the Swadeshi movement in Bengal following upon the Partition, Moslems were set against the Hindus. Later on the Moslem League itself was started with the advice of the government with a view to counteract the Hindu Nationalist activities.[2] Thanks to events outside India and also to their advancement politically the Moslems could no longer be looked upon as loyal to the sircar. The non-cooperation movement saw both Hindus and Moslems fighting shoulder to shoulder against the enemy. It was however a temporary affair. On the liquidation of the movement the old hostilities began to come on the surface. This was the propitious moment for the British imperialists to accelerate their efforts to use their old tactics of 'divide and rule'.

As an example of how the communal feuds are encouraged by the British officials and how the community in minority is being exploited by imperialism to counteract the nationalist movement, let us take the affair of the celebration of cow sacrifice on the last Bakr-Id occasion in Delhi. The procession of cows meant for slaughter was forbidden by the Hindu Kotwal of the city to pass through a particular street where there was a danger of Hindu-Moslem riot breaking out. The British district officer exploited the opportunity and marched at the head of the procession reminding the Moslems in eloquent terms of their right to kill as many cows as they liked and to take the procession by whatever route they desired. The tone of the deputy commissioner was not of a man who would use his authority to calm excited passions, but of a man who was encouraging and even exciting the mob to adopt an aggressive attitude. The object of the British officer was achieved. An Urdu Moslem daily which used to be an organ of Khilafat and antagonistic to the British reported the incident with the headlines in big print: 'The Hindu Kotwal forbade our procession, but the British Deputy Commissioner led it to its destination'. Of course the whole responsibility for this deplorable situation rests on the people who afford such opportunities to imperialism to exploit their quarrels for their own nefarious ends.

The British diplomats adapt their harangue according to the Community which they wish to please at a particular time in order to enforce their 'divide and rule' policy. When Moslems are destined to be the 'favourite wife',[3] the British Empire is represented to be the biggest Moslem Empire in the world as it counts millions of Mussulmans under its yoke. A madcap Moslem priest had actually prophesied that his Britannic Majesty would embrace Islam, by which process the Empire would become Moslem. The Moslems, who are sometimes called 'virile' by flattery, are led to think that they must have special consideration in any scheme of Swaraj because as predecessors of British rulers they have a 'special status'. It is on the basis of the 'special status' that the Moslems demand a greater percentage of the seats than in proportion to their actual number. On the other hand, when the Moslems are 'conspiring with his Majesty's enemies outside India' and it is desired to placate Hindu feelings, it is discovered that the British are as pure Aryans in origin as the Hindus. At the same time the bogey of Pan-Islamism with all its dangers to Hinduism is made a subject of propaganda in the imperialist press. It is preached that if law and order are set at nought in India, if the Britishers are forced to withdraw, the Afghans would invade the country and would enslave and loot the Hindus with the support of the Indian Moslems.

The Remedy

Much thought has been devoted to seek a remedy for the disastrous evil of 'communal strife'. Pacts and Protocols have been made, but have not worked. In view of the present alarming situation, one Roy Chowdhury, who is a Government nominated labour 'representative' in the Legislative Assembly, has proposed that a demonstration of the British strength should be made by marching an army through all the areas affected by the communal riots. The labour 'representative' wishes to vie with General Dyer in keeping up the prestige of British arms. Another fantastic scheme which found favour in high nationalist quarters was to disenfranchise the people of the district which was the scene of communal fighting.

These schemes or pacts etc. are only meant to protect the thin layer of 2 per cent of the population, the enfranchised ones who for the sake of their 'loaves and fishes' carry on reckless propaganda among the masses. These gentlemen should not be allowed to exploit the masses for their personal ends if any permanent solution of the situation is desired. Pacts and protocols may effect compromise for the time being among these warring intellectuals, but unless something is done to arouse the consciousness of the masses on the basis of a politico-economic programme, the malefactors would again be able to plunge the country into disastrous riots.

The mixing of religion with politics is another factor which leads to resuscitation of communal bickerings. A political movement based on religion cannot but lead to religious aggressiveness and thus defeat its own purpose. There can only be a temporary cooperation among the different religious communities who join hands in the struggle against a common enemy. Once this struggle is slackened the allies fall foul of one another, and the weapon used against the third party is employed more vigorously against each other. The people of India may have any number of religions, but politically and economically, they find themselves in the same situation. Therefore, it is on this basis only that a permanent union among the people can be effected. The movement for national emancipation must be divorced uncompromisingly from religion, otherwise it will bring ruin and disaster in its wake. There lies the only hope for the success of the struggle.

Who should lead such a movement and what should be its programme?

A National Union formed sometime ago and comprising people of different shades of political opinion cannot achieve any important results. It is not only far removed from the masses and a mass movement but also is composed of a motley crowd of Swarajists, liberals and moderates. The masses have been affected by the communal evil, their legitimate discontent and their class struggle is being exploited in the name of religion by the bourgeois and middle-class politicians to gain their political and economic ends. This malady can only be remedied by tireless activities of a party which should be formed from the masses, which should apply the dynamic force of the class struggle for their emancipation and not for their personal ends. Such a party has to unmask the wire-pullers of the present rioting. It has to condemn both aggressive Hinduism and aggressive Islam. Its aims should be to free the people from the slavery of religious fanaticism and traditional social evils, and to transform the religious ideology of the masses into consciousness of their politico-economic struggle.

The Swaraj Party, the custodians of bourgeois nationalism of the Congress, is also unable to take upon itself the stupendous task. A part of the rank and file of the party, discontented and disgusted with the leadership, may break away from the parent organization and lay the foundation of a party of the people. But that is hypothetical at the present moment. The Party as a whole has definitely broken away from the masses. It has pledged itself to Dominion Status within the Empire. Its craving for a compromise with imperialism is stronger than ever. Its ranks have already been thinned by the breaking away of a group styling themselves as Responsivists.[4] After the experience of mass upheaval of the non-cooperation days, it has a mortal dread of the tremendous forces of the masses. By its foolish mistakes it has allowed the clever imperialists to alienate Mussulmans from its ranks.

The confusion is great. But there is no reason for disappointment. There are already signs of the crystallization of a party to be founded on mass action. Its programme has to be: 1) complete independence of India and formation of a Federal republic of India with right of self-determination for minorities. 2) Abolition of landlordism, and allocation of land to landless peasantry. 3) To free the peasantry and workers from usurers by starting agricultural banks and cooperatives. 4) Minimum living wage for the workers, eight-hour day, maternity benefits, old age pension etc. 5) Nationalization of the works of public utility. 6) Improvement of agriculture by State aid. 7) Freedom for workers and peasants to form their unions. 8) Freedom of worship, but no religion allowed to be mixed with politics.

It is only on such a programme that the wide masses of the people can be united, their dynamic energy employed for their liberation and not for cutting each others throats, as at present. The programme gives a wide scope of constructive work such as our present-day politicians have sworn to undertake but have never carried out. 'Back to the villages' not to preach the virtues of Charka and Khaddar, but to arouse the consciousness of the peasantry to struggle for obtaining higher standards of life and to revolt against the political and economic bondage. Mass civil disobedience, the discarded weapon of the bourgeois nationalism, would crown the programme of action and Hindus and Moslems would march shoulder to shoulder as brothers in the fight.

Notes

[1] According to the *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission* (London, 1930, Vol. IX, p. 66) between 1923 and 1927 there were 88 communal riots in the United Provinces alone in which 81 people were killed and 2,301 injured. The totals for India 1922–27, according to the same report, were about 450 killed and 5000 injured (Vol. IV, Part I, p. 106). The worst

hit was Calcutta in 1926. For other contemporary accounts, *India in 1925–26*; also N. N. Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, 1926, Vol. 2.

[2] In Morley Papers (India Office Library Eur. Mss D. 573) Letters to Minto (Vols. 1–3B), Letters from Minto (Vols. 6–22), in Minto Papers (National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh) Letters and Telegrams, India, 10 vols, and in Curzon's Correspondence with Secretary of State (British Museum) 1903, 1904–05, much evidence exists to support the view that the British government, especially the Viceroys and many highly placed British officials in India and Britain, actively sought to foster Muslim distrust and hostility towards the Hindus and to manipulate communal division with a view to curbing the new forces of nationalism, especially in Bengal.

The Muslim League was founded on 30 December 1906 with the declared objective of promoting 'loyalty to the British government' and protecting and advancing 'the political rights and interests of Mussalmans of India'. *The Aligarh Institute Gazette* 9 January 1907.

[3] The expression that the Moslem community was his '*suo rani*' (favourite wife) was used by Sir Bampfylde Fuller, Chief Commissioner of Assam and, after Partition, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam. According to his successor, Lancelot Hare, Fuller was 'playing off the two sections of the population against each others'. Minto to Morley, 15 August 1906.

[4] When in 1925 S. B. Tambe, the Swarajist President of the C.P. Council, accepted an Executive Councillorship under the C.P. government, this was strongly condemned by the Executive of the All-India Swaraj Party (November 1925) under Motilal Nehru's leadership. The condemnation was publicly criticized by N. C. Kelkar and M. R. Jayakar who resigned from the Executive of the Swaraj Party and formed the 'Responsivist' group with Dr Moonje and others. SNR

How to Organize a Working Class Party?*

When, in 1920, the first voice was raised to declare the necessity of organizing in India a political party of the working class, it almost sounded like a voice in the wilderness.[1] Generally, the idea was considered to be fantastic—unrealizable dream of some exiles looking at India through glasses stained with the knowledge of European countries. The *bhadralok* politicians could not conceive of the common people having any say or significance in the movement to shape the destinies of the country. Curiously enough, this indifference to the importance of the masses and failure to admit that they could possibly have any political significance prevailed even among the revolutionary nationalists when the country was in the throes of a revolution caused by the fact that for the first time the masses participated actively in the nationalist movement. The British rulers, however, know India and the relative potentiality of the social forces that underlie the nationalist movement much better than the nationalists themselves. While the latter indulge in dreams about an India that never existed and will never exist, the imperialists are guided by a thorough knowledge of realities. Without this superior knowledge it would have been impossible for them to hold their position against such apparently overwhelming odds.

The post-war discontent caused the imperialists many a sleepless night. They were mortally afraid of that revolutionary ferment of popular energy. It might result into anything very ugly. As a matter of fact it dangerously tended to that direction. What was lacking, fortunately for the imperialists, was a bold, consciously revolutionary leadership. And it was but a question of time. Such a gigantic fermentation of mass energy was sure to throw up a conscious vanguard—the revolutionary party of the working class. The ripening of objective conditions was bound to create the corresponding subjective reflex. The Indian working class was the backbone of a great political movement. It must develop its own political organ. Imperialism was quite alive to these possibilities of the situation. Therefore, it was not indifferent to the voice which called for the organization of a working class party. The imperialists knew that that voice was not foreign to India; on the contrary, it was organically connected with the subjective reflex of the conditions in India. A working class party would determinedly fight the compromise politics of the bourgeois nationalists. It would boldly mobilize the fermented popular energy and direct it for the conquest of concrete objects, the initial ones being national freedom and democratization of the country.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II No. 11, November 1926. Unsigned article, slightly shortened with deletions indicated by three dots (. . .). SNR

Consequently, all the forces of imperialism were put into action in order to prevent the growth of a working class party. Everything was done to check and cripple the vanguard of the Indian proletariat. The nationalist movement as a whole remained indifferent to that struggle between two apparently unequal forces—the pioneers of the Indian proletariat and agencies of imperialist repression. Worse than that: in critical moments leading sections of the nationalist movement joined in the imperialist cry against 'Bolshevist menace' as the call for the organization of the working class party was depicted to be. Still steeped in class prejudice, the middle classes looked askance at the activities of the proletarian vanguard, although they themselves were proletarianized as the result of imperialist exploitation. The masses themselves, misled and betrayed by the reactionary nationalist leaders (like Gandhi) whom they had so wholeheartedly trusted, were not yet conscious enough to recognize in the call the voice of their own class. Victims of age-long exploitation, they were still too ignorant, too backward to be conscious of their class interests.

The small proletarian vanguard, however, survived all vicissitudes. Imperialist oppression could not kill it. Nationalist indifference did not make it any less an important factor in the political life of the country. The pioneers have blazed the trail. The question is no longer whether India needs an independent working class party or not, whether her 'special genius' permits such an outlandish innovation. It is much more practical. *How to organize a working class party*? This is the question.

The obstruction to the organization of a working class party comes from many directions. The frontal attack of the enemy—fierce repression of the vanguard—is now supplemented by clever stratagems of flank attack. Now that it is no longer possible to prevent the rise of a working class party, the strategy of imperialism and its native allies is to mislead the working class—to divert its growing class consciousness into harmless reformist channels. Instead of being opposed, as before, the idea of forming a working class party receives patronage from unexpected quarters, and in many instances the sinister hand of imperialism is perceptible behind the scene. Under these conditions goes on the process of political crystallization of the proletarian forces.

Politically awake middle class intellectuals, who are opposed to compromise with imperialism and advocate a militant continuation of the nationalist struggle, talk of organizing the masses. But very few of them seem to know how to go about the work they propose to undertake. They still labour under class prejudice. When they do talk of the masses, they assume a charitable attitude. They do not act as the ideological spokesmen of the working class. They do not identify themselves with the class they would lead to salvation. As a matter of fact, they do not recognize class interests and class antagonism. They want to uplift the down-trodden, not to lead the expropriated and exploited in the revolt against class domination. They have no faith in the masses. They do not admit that the working class is the backbone of society—that the future of human society lies in the hollow of the rough hand of the 'ignorant' toiler. Betrayed by the bourgeois nationalist leaders, these intellectuals have only been forced to see that the movement for national freedom will never succeed without active participation of the masses. Hence their wish to capture the masses, in other words, to use the masses as so many pawns in the struggle.

This is not the way to a working class party. People who do not stand on the ground of class struggle cannot constitute the vanguard of the proletariat. Those who propose to 'harmonize the interests of the masses and the classes' would organize the working class only to betray them. The slogan of a real working class party must be: *Not the masses for the revolution, but revolution for the masses.*[2]

Then there are others who even do not want to capture the masses to force a political change that will put them in power. They propose to capture the masses for counter-revolution. These saviours of the working class are actuated with the motive to prevent the growth of a real revolutionary proletarian party—at least to see that the evil day is put off as far as possible. There are too many of these 'champions of labour' on the field.

Even as we write there comes the news that the repeatedly abortive attempt to form a 'Labour Party' has once more been revived, this time under the leadership of Bepin Pal![3] Those acquainted with the antecedents and ideas of Bepin Pal cannot have any illusion about this 'labour party'. Making due allowance for his notorious erraticism, Bepin Pal is amazingly class conscious. On this one question at least he has always been very constant. Under his editorship the *Bengalee* became the most clear-sighted organ of the Indian bourgeoisie. Only two years ago, in the columns of that capitalist organ Bepin Pal expounded his theory that 'poverty was a mental state' and popularized the slogan: 'Work for love; wages are but a by-product'. Only the other day Pal startled the country by declaring that if he were the

Viceroy he would also sternly suppress all efforts to disturb the regime of law and order. Bepin Pal, like Lajpat Rai, another champion of 'Labour Party', is a pillar of the reactionary Hindu nationalism. In nationalist politics both advocate 'responsive cooperation' which means compromise with imperialism in the interests of steady and orderly development of native capitalism.[4] Agreement between the imperialist and native bourgeoisie can be only at the expense of the masses who will all the more be bled so that the greed of both the rivals is satisfied. The role of a 'Labour Party' formed under such auspices is evident. It is to betray the working class, if they would follow such questionable champions.

Of course, there is no reason to believe that this attempt would be more successful than the previous ones. Very likely nothing more will be heard of the 'Labour Party' in a few months, if not in a few weeks. These attempts fail invariably because of the atmosphere of unreality in which they are made. A few ambitious intellectuals together with one or two politicians with their particular axe to grind take it in their heads to form a 'Labour Party'. Usually these gentlemen possess little understanding of the problems confronting the working class. The working class is left alone, the membership of the party being limited to a string of office-bearers. Having declared the birth of a 'Labour Party' the office-bearers go home evidently expecting the working class to seek their champions there. Never any propaganda or agitation is made in behalf of the party. No effort is ever made to recruit members from the working class. This being the case one could ignore these attempts to form pseudo-Labour Parties as harmless, if they did not show *how the working class should not be organized*. . .

The object of forming such 'labour parties' under the highly questionable patronage of bourgeois politicians is evident. It is to 'take the working class in hand', as C.R. Das advised already at the Gaya Congress. The bourgeois politicians are prompted to patronize these safe and sane, ineffective, often non-existing, super-class, legal 'labour parties' as set off against the rise of a revolutionary working class party. . .

While counter-revolutionary bourgeois politicians and agents of imperialism, in deceptive garbs, are seeking to divert the growing class consciousness of the young Indian proletariat into wrong channels, the revolutionary vanguard of the working class must know how to accomplish its task—how to organize the working class party. One essential thing to be kept always in mind is that the party is the vanguard of the class and that the strength of the vanguard lies in its close and constant contact with the army it leads. The vanguard should be careful not to go too fast and too far ahead of the entire working class. The party as the political organ of the class must grow out of the class. It should not be formed, as the so-called labour parties, far away from the working class, to be imposed upon it, or even to ignore it. Ideological pioneers of the working class party may come from the declassed intellectuals (it is bound to be so particularly in India where the middle class intellectuals are proletarianized and the proletariat culturally backward), but the bulk of the membership should be recruited from the proletariat.

There is no party without a programme. The programme of the party reflects the demands of the class it represents. The programme of a working class party, therefore, is the programme of Socialism. Objectively, the working class throughout the world stands for the abolition of capitalist system and the establishment of socialist society. The wage-slave is destined by history to revolt against and abolish the system of wage-slavery. But the road to Socialism passes through successive stages of social development. The working class in countries, which have had these stages of social development, is engaged in the final stage of class-struggle—struggle for the immediate realization of Socialism. The situation in India is different.

India is engaged in the revolutionary struggle for democratic freedom. This will be realized through the overthrow of foreign domination and liquidation of the medieval socio-economic institutions. The working class must actively participate and lead this struggle for democratic freedom. The working class party, therefore, must fight under two programmes: a minimum programme to be realized in the immediate future and a maximum programme the realization of which will depend upon the carrying out of the minimum programme. The minimum programme will contain immediate demands of the working class and will be broad enough to rally around the working class all the other social elements whose interests demand national independence and complete democratization of the country. Democratic republic, universal suffrage, protection for minorities, educational facilities, agrarian revolution, removal of obstructions to the forces of production, fulfilment of the immediate demands of the proletariat (wage, hours, conditions of labour etc.)—these will be main features of the minimum programme.

Although the realization of the maximum programme is a comparatively remote issue in the present conditions of India, its formulation is essential for the growth and guidance of the working class party. The maximum programme of the working class party is the programme of victorious class-struggle of Social Revolution, of Socialism. The minimum programme should be fitted into the framework of the maximum programme. It is but means to the end. The working class must participate in and lead if necessary, (as it is in

India), the fight for the conquest of democratic freedom as an advance towards the realization of Socialism. Unless the maximum programme of social revolution is constantly and clearly kept before the party, there is the danger of opportunist deviation.

Under normal conditions of social evolution the rising bourgeoisie in possession of higher means of production fights for democratic freedom which releases the forces of production from feudal fetters. A series of foreign invasions disturbed the normal course of social development in India. Bourgeois revolution, in so far as it deprives feudalism of political power and establishes a centralized capitalist State, took place in India in the shape of British conquest. After more than a century of forced stagnation native capitalism grew, potentially antagonistic to imperialist monopoly. The native bourgeoisie, which aspires for political power, is, however, not ready to fight for it. The British domination cannot be overthrown without a revolutionary fight. This depends upon the mobilization of the mass energy. The native bourgeoisie is afraid of a revolution. They would rather share power with imperialist overlords and grow economically under their protection. Thus the struggle for national freedom under bourgeois leadership and with a capitalist programme has ended in compromise. The nationalist bourgeoisie would be satisfied with self-government within the Empire. This means the bourgeoisie have abandoned the fight for the complete democratization of the country. The task of carrying through the bourgeois revolution, which began with the British conquest, therefore, devolves upon the working class and other exploited sections of the society. The working class must carry on a determined fight against compromise with imperialism, because this compromise will intensify capitalist exploitation of India. Greed of native capitalism will be satisfied not by diminishing imperialist plunder, but by intensifying the exploitation of the Indian working class.

Even if the bourgeoisie had not abandoned the fight for democratic freedom, the working class should have still participated in it as an advance towards the fight for Socialism. Under given conditions the hegemony of the struggle devolves upon the proletariat. Consequently, the minimum programme of the working class party comes very close to the maximum. So much so, that the fight for the realization of one directly leads up to the fight for the other. This situation must tell upon the organization and activities of the party.

On the sound basis of this revolutionary programme the party will be built by untiring, detailed everyday work of the vanguard. It is clear that economic freedom for the working class cannot be secured except through the capture of political power. This is one of the cardinal principles of working class politics. Any improvement of the conditions of the Indian working class depends upon the cessation of imperialist robbery and the liquidation of antiquated social relations that still cramp the economic life of the country. In other words, the future of the working class is inseparably bound up with the political struggle for democratic national freedom. Social emancipation of the working class is a still remoter issue—conditional upon the fierce struggle for State-power. But the great majority of the Indian working class are still politically too backward to see so far ahead and fight for such a distant goal. They are overwhelmed by the immediate surroundings. The working class party will develop in the midst of the struggle against the immediate surroundings of the average working man. In course of this everyday fight the party will show, by practical experience, how the immediate issue of wages, hours, labour conditions, etc. are connected with the larger and apparently remoter political issues.

Agitation and propaganda among the proletarian masses are vitally necessary for the building up of the working class party. The programme of the party must be popularized. The class consciousness of the masses must be awakened. This will be done through the party press, public meetings, workmen's clubs, proclamations, leaflets etc. The vanguard must be in the midst of the unconscious and partially conscious masses agitating, educating, organizing, leading. In a country like ours where the masses are so lamentably backward, the danger is great for the vanguard to be isolated from the class. Nothing could be more disastrous for the party. Every member of the party must be attached to a group of workers with the task of winning them for the party.

Trade unions, peasant organizations and cooperative societies are the field of operation of the working class party. Side by side with its activities in these organizations, the party must also reach the working class at the places of work, factories etc. The major portion of the Indian proletariat are still unorganized. It is for the party to organize them into trade unions. Propaganda in favour of revolutionary labour organization of class struggle must be carried on. Party members must penetrate the existing trade unions and peasant organizations in order to transform them into fighting working class organs. Agitation should be made in favour of socialist and proletariat leadership of the unions and other working class bodies.

Press is an essential instrument to build up the party. Through its organs the party keeps constant contact with the working class by giving expression to the grievances and demands of the latter. Through its theoretical organs the party educates its own members as regards the programme and tasks of the party, and wins new adherents. There cannot be any party without a party press.[5] To extend the circulation of the party organs and publication is the duty of each party member.

Lastly, ideological clarity on the part of the vanguard is indispensable for the organization of a real working class party. Otherwise we may repeat the story of the blind leading the blind. Only a clear-sighted revolutionary vanguard with faith in the masses, fully conversant with the role the proletariat is destined to play, closely connected with the entire working class, will organize the working class party in India. In short, there cannot be a real working class party without a Marxian leadership.[6]

Notes

[1] This refers to 'An Indian Communist Manifesto' written by Roy and published in the *Glasgow Socialist* and to Roy's Theses at the Second Congress of the Comintern. See *Selected Works Vol. I.*

[2] The credo printed at the top of *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* from its third issue (15 June 1922) was: Not the masses for revolution, but revolution for the masses.

[3] At the All-India Trade Union Congress session held at Bombay in February in 1925 a Labour Party was launched—its sponsors included Lala Lajpat Rai, Sir Sankaran Nair, Dewan Chamanlal, N. M. Joshi, and D. P. Sinha. Roy wrote on it a critical editorial 'A Labour Party for India' in *The Masses* of May 1925 (Vol. 1 No. 5). Neither Lajpat Rai's nor Bepin Pal's subsequent efforts were effective in establishing a Labour Party.

[4] The turns and twists in Bepin Chandra Pal's career and the inconsistencies in his writings and speeches were the subject of an earlier review article in *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* (Vol. I No. 9. 15 September 1922) by Santi Devi (Evelyn Roy), published under the title 'Three Phases of Bepin Chandra Pal', which critically examined Pal's three booklets, *The New Economic Menace to India* (1920), *Non-Cooperation* (1920) and *After Two Years* (1922). Pal (1858–1932), in his youth, was an active member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and a bold social reformer, but later he turned to bhakti and defence of tradition. With Tilak and Aurobindo he had propagated militant nationalism, but in the 1920s he opposed non-cooperation and became an advocate of a re-constituted British empire of which India was to be a self-governing partner. Despite changes and inconsistencies, there was much acumen and originality in Pal's writings which were quite prolific.

[5] In 1924 Roy had sent a printing press to Ram Charan Lal Sharma in Pondicherry, at that time his principal contact in India. The press was brought from Marseilles by Roy's emissary Muhammad Ali 'Sepassi', but according to an Intelligence Bureau report, the agent of Sharma who received it 'converted it to his own private use, and eventually sold it and retained the proceeds' (David Petrie, *Communism in India* p. 61). In March 1926 Roy again sent a printing press which arrived in Pondicherry, but which nonetheless did not reach the Party. M.N. Roy's Letter to J.P. Bagerhatta of 20 March 1926, (Meerut Records p 2169, (1) P.)

[6] Before publishing this article in *The Masses* Roy had sent a copy of it from Berlin on behalf of the Foreign Bureau to the Central Committee of the CPI together with a covering letter dated 13 October 1926, instructing the Committee to issue it in the name of the Party on the occasion of the proposed party conference in November. In the letter he again explained that he had in mind two organizations, 'a people's party' which is 'a revolutionary-nationalist party' and 'a broad working class party, say the workers' and peasants' party' which would be 'a veiled communist party'. He also gave his reasons why 'the term communist party has been purposely kept out of the document', the main considerations being legality and 'a broad basis' which the party would require to be built and developed. SNR

Programme of a Working Class Party*

In the article—'How to Organise a Working Class Party'—published in our last issue, it was warned 'unless the maximum programme of Social Revolution is constantly and clearly kept before the party, there is the danger of opportunist deviation'. An analytical study of the programme of the Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party, as formulated by the president of the Party, Naresh Sen Gupta in the second number of the 'Gana Vani', shows how timely and warranted is the warning.

In his programme article, Comrade Sen Gupta visualizes social revolution as the object of the party. While answering what the Workers' and Peasants' Party means by freedom, he says:

'For us the country is not the handful of rich upper class. The interest of the millions of poor labourers is the real interest of the country. To imagine the country free while these millions of labourers are still deprived of freedom is madness.'

Complete freedom—economical, political and social—for the labouring masses is conditional upon the abolition of class. From the general drift of Comrade Sen Gupta's article one can gather that he does not consider the formal political liberty in capitalist democracy as real freedom. What makes political liberty in capitalist democracy a mere formality as far as the labouring masses are concerned? Economic domination of the propertied classes who own and control the means of production. Political liberties under capitalist democracy are only a formality because they do not eliminate the right of exploitation of man by man. Under capitalist democracy society is split up into two classes—exploiting and the exploited. Although a minority, the former, by virtue of its ownership of the means of production, controls the economic life of society. The majority is expropriated and exploited even under the guise of political liberties of capitalist democracy. Consequently, the object visualized by Comrade Sen Gupta cannot be realized—the millions of labouring masses cannot be really free until private property is abolished, means of production are socialised, wage-slavery is eliminated and class domination is terminated. In short, perhaps unwittingly, Comrade Sen Gupta commits the party to the programme of social revolution.

But how does he propose to realize this very correct programme of the Workers' and Peasants' Party? There is much confusion in the formulation of the programme; but the confusion becomes worse confounded when Comrade Sen Gupta develops this programme in practical details. If the party accepts the theories of Comrade Sen Gupta and follows the line indicated by him, it will sink in the quagmire of opportunism. The party must have an ideologically clear leadership in order to avoid this calamity.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II No. 12 December 1926, unsigned article. SNR

The first opportunist deviation of Comrade Sen Gupta is the attempt to beg the question of relation with the British Empire. He says that:

'It is waste of time to argue whether it is absolutely necessary to break away from the British Empire in order to realise our ideal of freedom.'

Comrade Sen Gupta sets before us an ideal of freedom which must be attained through a social revolution. But he declares it to be unessential to discuss under what conditions that freedom will be attainable. Liberation from foreign domination is the primary condition for the complete political, economic and social freedom of the Indian people. In the opinion of Comrade Sen Gupta the fulfilment of this primary condition is not essential. Immediately after committing the party to the programme of social revolution, he states:

'It is not impossible for India to attain fully real freedom while remaining inside the British Empire.'

He even goes so far as to assert that it will be 'advantageous for us to maintain friendly relations with England'. Here, the question arises in whose behalf is he speaking? As the president of the Workers' and Peasants' Party he must be the spokesman of the labouring masses. The relation between the labouring masses of India and British imperialism is that of exploitation. India's remaining inside the British Empire, no matter on what condition, means the preservation of that relation.

The British Empire is reared largely on the basis of the exploitation of the Indian masses. It is indeed beyond comprehension how the relations with this Empire can be 'advantageous for us' (workers and peasants of India). Comrade Sen Gupta talks of 'friendly relations with England'. Perhaps he has the British working class in mind. But the British Empire should not be confounded with the British working class. Friendly relations with the British working class is certainly advantageous for the Indian people in the struggle for freedom. But this friendship does not tend to keep India within the Empire. On the contrary, it spells disruption of the Empire. Indian people must have the friendship and cooperation of the British working class to liberate themselves from imperialist exploitation—to break away from imperialist domination and enter into a free national existence.

On the question of imperial relations, Comrade Sen Gupta further states:

'If the day comes when it will be really necessary to decide this question, then it will have to be done according to the verdict of the people, in consultation with England and taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of our relations with England.'

Breaking up of all imperial connection—national independence—is the burning question of the day. This question will not have to be solved some day. It must be solved at this moment. And there is nothing to decide. The situation is obvious. Indian workers and peasants are exploited by British capital. In order to be free from this exploitation they must deprive British capital of the political power over India. On this the verdict of the people is not to be awaited. The verdict is given. The role of the party that represents the labouring masses is to voice the verdict. The party is the conscious vanguard of the working class. It must give concrete expression to the objective demands of the working class. The interests of the workers and peasants of India are antagonistic to imperialism. Freedom, progress and prosperity of the Indian masses are conditional upon the elimination of the agency of exploitation that keeps them politically enslaved, culturally backward and materially pauperized. This being the case, the objective demand of the people is that this agency of exploitation must be eliminated as soon as possible.

Comrade Sen Gupta would have India break up imperial relations by consultation with England. In other words, one must consult with the burglar as to whether the latter is prepared to leave the house he has broken into! The question of 'advantage and disadvantage of our relations with England' has been dealt with above. In short, Indian landowning and capitalist classes may find it advantageous to maintain imperial connection as a safeguard against the possible revolt of the exploited masses; but for the workers and peasants the imperial connection is entirely disadvantageous. It should be broken as soon as possible.

On the very vital question of national independence, Comrade Sen Gupta has committed a series of grave mistakes. This is due to the defective understanding of class struggle and of imperialism.

A mistaken and opportunist attitude on this basic question leads to erroneous theories as regards the methods by which Indian masses will win freedom. He rules out armed revolt as impossible for India. He does so owing to a lamentable lack of faith in the power of the masses. He admits that 'there is no power that can resist the organized force of the popular masses'. But he insinuates that the Indian workers and peasants are not capable of developing such an organized force. He compares the elemental revolt of the disarmed, impoverished and badly organized Indian masses to the impotent fury of the weak aspiring to lay the giant low. This is a counsel of pessimism. This is defeatism. Indian labouring masses expect something else from their party.

Comrade Sen Gupta very correctly agrees that the non-cooperation movement collapsed because it was not supported by organized mass energy. The non-cooperation movement was a mass movement. It was indeed the first great mass movement in the history of modern India. The movement did not fail owing to the weakness of the masses; it failed because the leaders refused to develop the fermented mass energy. They refused because further development of the mass energy in organized form would inevitably lead to national insurrection.

As against all other methods (constitutional agitation, non-cooperation, insurrection) Comrade Sen Gupta puts forward organized action of the masses as the most effective. Quite correct. But why shirk the issue and thereby set up opportunist illusions? The ultimate form which organized mass action is bound to take is insurrection. What is the use of mobilizing the revolutionary energy of the masses (as Comrade Sen Gupta proposes to do) unless it is to be used effectively. The slogan of 'non-payment of taxes' rallied the peasant masses under the banner of the non-cooperation movement. The next step was to lead the peasantry against the landlords and the forces of imperialism that stood behind them. That is to lead the peasant to an insurrectionary uprising. The masses are to be organized, the mass energy is to be developed and mobilized for a fight with the forces that exploit the masses. These forces would not fade away as soon as the masses are organized. On the contrary, in proportion as the masses are organized, mass energy is mobilized in the fight for freedom, the dominating and exploiting forces become more aggressive—their methods become offensive. The masses must either break down this offensive or succumb before it.

Perhaps Comrade Sen Gupta has the Syndicalist 'folded arm' theory in his mind. But this theory has exploded in practice. The working class may fold their hands, but the bourgeoisie make full use of their hands as well as of all the instruments of oppression—press, pulpit, espionage, police, army, etc.—in their hands. The working masses must organize themselves not for the sake of organization, but to fight against and overthrow the present system of class domination.

Comrade Sen Gupta's theories as regards imperial relation and the method in the struggle for freedom are closely connected. They mutually produce each other. If you are against the method of organizing the masses for a revolutionary fight, you must spin out theories of 'real freedom' inside the Empire. On the other hand, if you are of the opinion that 'real freedom' is attainable inside the Empire, why should you travel the dangerous road of insurrection. But these theories are not the theories of working class politics. They should be quickly discarded by the Workers' and Peasants' Party.

We are obliged to point out still one more mistake in the programme outlined by Comrade Sen Gupta. This is also a grave mistake and opens up the high road to opportunism.

After stating the supreme necessity of organizing the labouring masses, Comrade Sen Gupta proceeds to lay down what should be done for this purpose. In his opinion, in order to organize the working classes we must see that measures are taken to improve their economic conditions. This is simply putting the cart before the horse. The working class is organized not after economic, sanitary and educational conditions are improved. They organize themselves in the midst of the fight for such improvements—in the fight for the eight-hour day, minimum wage, tolerable labour conditions, political rights, educational facilities, etc. In course of the fight for immediate demands, the working classes acquire political education. They learn that immediate economic conditions are fundamentally linked up with the entire social system, that the working class cannot be really free unless the entire social system is changed. They also learn in experience that the necessary transformation of society cannot be effected except by overthrowing the political domination of the possessing class and by the capture of the state power.[1]

Notes

[1] The Labour Swaraj Party of the Indian National Congress organized the Nikhil Banga Praja Sammelan at Krishna Nagar on 6–7 February 1926 when the name of the party was changed to Bangiya Krishak O Sramik Dal (Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal). The Conference was chaired by Dr Naresh Chandra Sengupta who was elected president of the new party with Qutbuddin Ahmed and Hemanta Kumar Sarkar elected as joint secretaries. The constitution of the party was published in *Langal* of 18 February 1926. Whatever might have been the party president's reservations, the constitution clearly stated that 'complete independence of India based on political, social and economic equality of women and men' was the party's objective, that it would 'organize those who form eighty per cent of the country's population, that is, the workers and peasants', and its 'basic demands' included nationalization of public utilities and vesting of land-ownership in the village community. It is of some interest to note that out of the 16 members of the executive committee (besides the office bearers) elected at the Conference, 12 were Muslims.

Langal ceased publication in April; in August came out *Ganavani* as the weekly organ of the Bangiya Krishak O Sramik Dal with Muzaffar Ahmad as editor. It continued till October 1927 and then after a break resumed publication in June 1928. In February 1927 the Congress Labour Party in Bombay changed its name to Workers' and Peasants' Party.

Naresh Chandra Sengupta was a lawyer and professor of law, but he made his name in the 1920s as a 'realist' fiction-writer in Bengali. His themes and views were, by contemporary standards, radical. In 1927–28 he had a public controversy with Tagore on the nature of literature in which he defended 'realism' against Tagore's 'idealism'. SNR

The Elections in India*

The campaign which is proceeding at the moment of writing, in connection with the third general election to the parliamentary bodies in India, introduced by the reforms of 1919, is the most outstanding feature of the Indian political life. During the last year the nationalist movement has been torn asunder by a controversy on this question. No less than six parties, all calling themselves 'nationalist', are participating in the election.

The reforms granted in 1919 established in India the central legislative assembly and legislative councils in the nine provinces. The franchise on which the provincial legislative councils are based embrace little less than five million people, that is, 2.2 per cent of the entire population is represented in these parliamentary bodies. The central legislative assembly is based on a still narrower franchise, the electorate for that body being less than two million. The right of vote is determined by property qualifications which are excessively high in relation to the very low economic condition of the Indian masses. The electorate includes the landowning class, the big bourgeoisie, a section of the upper intellectuals and a small stratum of rich peasantry.

When the reforms were first granted, they were boycotted by the nationalist movement. It was considered that the reforms were very inadequate to meet the situation, that they did not come anywhere near the self-government promised by British imperialism during the war. Only the landowning class and the upper stratum of the bourgeoisie accepted the reforms. The first legislative assembly and councils were therefore composed entirely of the representatives of these two classes. Less than 20 per cent of the electorate participated in the elections. Under these conditions the legislative bodies were naturally very docile and supported the British government in suppressing the nationalist movement led by Gandhi under the slogan of passive resistance.

The strength of the nationalist movement during the years following the conclusion of the war was the widespread revolutionary discontent of the masses. The boycott of the pseudo-parliamentary institutions only reflected the grievances of a section of the bourgeoisie and the middle class intellectuals. Nevertheless, these elements were the leaders of the entire nationalist movement which was very revolutionary owing to its mass composition. The conflict between non-revolutionary, timid, petty bourgeois leadership and the dynamic forces of the mass following eventually led to the collapse of that big movement. The result was dissatisfaction against the program of boycott, and, in course of time, this dissatisfaction crystallized into a definite demand for the repudiation of the boycott program. The bourgeois and the petty bourgeois elements in the non-cooperation movement parted company with the revolutionary masses and decided to enter the legislative councils, ostensibly with the object of opposing the British autocracy through that channel.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. VI, No. 84, 2 December 1926, pp. 1438–39.

The nationalist movement was split on the issue of entering the legislative councils. The section that advocated participation in the ensuing elections with the purpose of capturing the legislative bodies, at the end of 1922 constituted themselves into the Swaraj Party. A year later, the second election took place. The Swaraj Party contested the election but failed to get a majority in the central legislative assembly. Of all the nine provincial councils, only in one was a clear Swarajist majority returned. In another province the Swaraj Party became the single largest party and with the support of other radical nationalist elements formed an opposition bloc.

The Swaraj Party entered the legislative councils with a program of blocking the administrative machinery by constant and consistent opposition. It pledged itself not to accept ministerial office. During the lifetime (three years) of the second legislative council, the policy of obstruction was gradually abandoned, just as previously the policy of boycott had also been abandoned. Towards the end of the term the Swaraj Party was rent by the controversy over the acceptance of office. A very strong right-wing had developed inside the party which declared that the policy of obstruction had proved impracticable and that the logical consequence of entering the councils was to accept the responsibility of government.

In the central government the question of accepting office does not arise because all the members of the government are appointed by the Viceroy. The reform has introduced a peculiar system of government in the provinces. The government is divided into two parts—one appointed by the Governor and acting independently of the legislative council; the other, also appointed by the Governor but subordinated to the council to the extent that their salary is to be voted by the council. The second part of the government is responsible for the local self-government, sanitation, education and agriculture—the so called 'nation-building departments'. Now the controversy is whether the nationalists should accept the responsibility for administering these nation-building departments.

The experience of the last three years has proven that even with a nationalist majority the legislative councils do not possess the power to shake the position of imperialism. Real state power is beyond the control of these legislative councils. The purpose with which these legislative bodies have been set up is to draw the upper classes of the Indian population closer to imperialism. The economic concessions made to the Indian bourgeoisie since the war have effectively reconciled the contradiction between imperialism and native capitalism. This being the case the legislative bodies representing the Indian landowning and capitalist classes cannot be the organ of nationalist opposition; they are bound to be the medium through which a compromise between bourgeois nationalism and imperialist domination will be realized.

When the Swaraj Party decided to enter the legislative councils and staked its future on the success of parliamentary victory, it bound itself entirely to the dictates of the narrow and enfranchised minority, that is, the landowning and capitalist classes. Now the landowning and capitalist classes find it convenient to come to an agreement with British imperialism in order to have a period of political peace conducive to the development of trade and industry. Any party seeking the vote of the landowning and capitalist classes must act according to the demands of these classes. The Swaraj Party is disintegrated owing to the contradiction between the necessity to have the support of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, and the desire to have a broad nationalist following by means of radical phraseology and opposition to the British bureaucracy.

As a matter of fact, on principle, even the Swaraj Party has agreed to accept office and work the reforms which were rejected as totally inadequate only six years ago. But the big bourgeoisie without whose support no party can have a majority in the parliamentary bodies demand a clear statement of program. They demand that the task of the nationalist politics should be to come to a speedy agreement with imperialism. A large section of the Swaraj Party has accepted this order of the bourgeoisie. They have declared unconditionally in favour of accepting the office. Of the six parties participating in the election, five are united into a bourgeois bloc against the Swaraj Party which still formally maintains its position—not to accept office.

But it is a foregone conclusion that under the present franchise it is not at all likely for the Swaraj Party to secure an independent majority.

The leaders of the Swaraj Party have often stated that the policy of the party will have to be changed after the results of the election are known. That is, if the Swaraj Party loses in the election, as it is almost sure to, it will change its policy according to the interests of the bourgeoisie.

But the social basis of the Swaraj Party is the middle class intellectuals and the urban petty bourgeoisie. These are largely unfranchised. Side by side with the development of the consciously bourgeois right wing there has been a marked revolutionary left wing crystallization among the rank and file. A defeat in the election will strengthen the position of the left wing which has been protesting against the parliamentary degeneration of the party.

The Swaraj Party is formally a part of the National Congress. In fact, the loose organization of the National Congress has, during the last two years, been used by the Swaraj Party as its election machine. The incongruity of the situation is obvious. An organization mainly of unfranchised masses is being used as an instrument of the bourgeoisie. This situation cannot continue forever. The annual session of the National Congress will be held at the end of December, that is, immediately after the results of the election are known. The Swaraj Party will have to appear before the National Congress and have the change of its policy approved. It is sure to meet with great difficulties. As soon as the bourgeois leaders of the Swaraj Party will appear before the National Congress with a resolution approving acceptance of office, the mask will be pulled down. The contradiction between the interests of the bourgeoisie and those of the masses including the middle class will stand out in all its nakedness. This will open the eyes of the left-wing who till now are not quite free from the influence of bourgeois nationalism.

Of course, it will be premature to state that the coming session of the Indian National Congress will mark a turning point in the history of this nationalist struggle. But what is indisputable is that the process of class differentiation inside the nationalist ranks had advanced so far that it is no longer possible for the bourgeois leaders to dominate the entire nationalist movement. The revolutionary left-wing may not be able to capture the leadership of the movement this year but it will certainly shake the position of the bourgeois leaders.

The growing activity of the proletariat and a renewed wave of peasant revolt objectively strengthens the position of the revolutionary wing of the nationalist movement. The petty-bourgeois radical element inside the nationalist movement will not be able to overthrow successfully the compromising bourgeois leadership until they come into closer contact with the proletariat and the peasantry. The work for the formation of this united fighting front is going on in spite of all difficulties. The political organization of the working class is advancing satisfactorily. It is on this organization that the task of uniting the petty-bourgeois revolutionary nationalists with the worker and peasant masses into a fighting united front devolves.[1]

Note

[1] At its Kanpur session (December 1925), the Congress decided to accept the Swaraj Party's programme and contest the general elections. In March 1926, the Swarajists walked out of the Central Legislature. Meanwhile, in February, a section of the Swaraj Party had broken away and formed the Responsive Cooperation Party: this group together with others constituted in April what it called the Indian National Party. In September the Responsivists and such other Congressmen as were opposed to the Swaraj Party formed a coalition named the Independent Congress Party which issued its election manifesto on 28 September. The Congress which had already absorbed the Swaraj Party also issued its own election manifesto in October.

In the 1926 general elections the Congress (or Swaraj Party) suffered heavy losses. As its leader Motilal Nehru himself admitted 'there has been a veritable rout of the Swarajists'. In the Legislative Assembly the party returned only '40 out of 104 elected members'. In the U.P. Provincial Council the number went down from 31 to 19, and in the Central Provinces from 44 to 15. In Madras alone the Swarajists fared well, but they lost ground in Bengal and Bombay. *India in 1926–27* compiled by J. Coatman, Govt. of India Publication, Cal. 1927. N. N. Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, 1926, Vol. 2. SNR

The Indian National Congress*

The 41st Annual Session of the Indian National Congress was celebrated during the last days of December. The annual session of the Congress is the most important occasion in the annals of the Nationalist movement. Important political decisions are taken there which govern the conduct of the movement during the following twelve months. The character of this year's session is indicated by the following quotation from the presidential address:

> 'No scheme of self-government will be acceptable which denies full control of the civil service, the military, naval and air forces, and political relations with the Indian states, and which refuses India Dominion status upon the same terms as those determined by the Imperial Conference'.

This can be taken as the programme of the Indian Nationalist Movement for the immediate future. The programme formulated in these words may be extreme or moderate according to the interpretation that will be put upon them eventually. But in the midst of this ambiguity one thing is very clear, that is, that the leaders who are very definitely against a revolutionary struggle are being pushed unwillingly towards a more extreme position under the pressure of the rank and file.

In spite of this general left tendency the Congress, as a whole, presented not a very encouraging spectacle. While three years ago as many as thirty thousand delegates attended it, this year the number of delegates dropped to two thousand five hundred. In other words, from a gigantic mass demonstration the annual session of the National Congress has become a meeting of a certain section of the nationalist movement.

Traditionally and theoretically, the National Congress is not a party organization, it is called the National Parliament. As a matter of fact, since its foundation in 1885, uptil the stormy years immediately following the imperialist war, the National Congress represented the political platform of the native bourgeoisie. In the period of 1919–22 the Congress was a gigantic mass organization focussing the revolutionary will of the entire people to become free from imperialist domination. But even during this revolutionary period the Congress essentially remained under bourgeois leadership. Its political outlook was reformist and its social ideology was decidedly reactionary. Although the conscious representatives of the big bourgeoisie left the Congress, the petty bourgeois nationalists who led the movement actually represented the bourgeoisie. They tried to use the revolutionary mass movement to further the reformist demands of native capitalism. This contradiction eventually led to the collapse of the movement. The Swaraj Party, which during the last two years has captured the National Congress, arose out of this collapse of the revolutionary mass movement.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. VII, No. 5, 13 January 1927, pp. 99–100. SNR

The Swaraj Party itself embodied the two conflicting tendencies inside the Nationalist Movement. The leadership was reformist while the rank and file inclined towards revolution. The central slogan of the nationalist movement during the acutely revolutionary period of 1919–22 was the refusal to cooperate with the British Government in any way. Essentially, this was a very revolutionary slogan and in reality it did develop into revolutionary action. The National Congress in 1920 decided to boycott the pseudo-parliamentary institutions introduced by the reforms of 1919. That was the central pivot of the non-cooperation movement. The Swaraj Party was born in the opposition to the programme of boycotting parliamentary institutions. In other words, the Swaraj Party was born by practically repudiating the programme of refusing to cooperate with the British Government. It proposed to fight imperialist absolutism through constitutional parliamentary ways. The essence of this programme was not an unconditional fight against imperialism but to negotiate with imperialism for the best possible terms of self-government within the British Empire. In comparison to this essentially reformist nature of the Swarajist programme, the demand contained in the above quotation from the speech of the President of this year's Congress is indeed extreme. When the Nationalist movement demands control of the military forces a compromise with imperialism becomes impossible. It is doubtful whether the President was fully aware of the gravity of his pronouncement. He might have said those words in order to pacify the rank and file which are becoming very dissatisfied with the policy of compromise; but the fact remains that the National Congress has officially committed itself to such an extreme position.[1]

Apart from this, this year's National Congress has practically taken no decisions. This indecisive character of it is all the more remarkable because never in its history has the National Movement required more urgently and clearly a determined lead. The big bourgeoisie has definitely gone over to the side of imperialism. The policy of parliamentary opposition advocated by the Swaraj Party has gone bankrupt. The interests of the masses demand a decisive struggle against imperialism. The British rulers are laying clever plans to intensify the exploitation of the Indian masses in conjunction with the native bourgeoisie. Under these circumstances the Nationalist Movement is faced with two clear alternatives, namely, capitulation to imperialism, or a bold revolutionary fight. The National Congress was expected to choose one or the other of these two alternatives. What it did, however, was to adopt the policy of 'wait and see'. But even this should be considered a victory for the revolutionary forces. The leaders had the intention of forcing upon the Congress their programme of compromise with imperialism. Obviously, they have not succeeded in this. Although they have not come out squarely in favour of a revolutionary fight, they have not been able to carry through their programme of capitulation. Of course, the present bourgeois leaders will never go with the revolutionary forces. As soon as they see that their following is getting out of their control, they will go over to the camp of counter-revolution where they really belong.

The indecisive and ambiguous position taken by this year's Congress has been determined by the results of the last elections which took place immediately before the Congress met. The Swaraj Party was split into not less than four factions by the controversy over the election programme. The general demand was for abandoning the tactics of parliamentary obstruction and assuming the responsibility of office. The official Swarajist leadership, however, could not agree to this demand. To do so would be tantamount to committing political suicide. The tactics of parliamentary obstruction was the one feature which distinguished the Swaraj Party from the other bourgeois parties. There is no difference in essentially political demands, the common demand being: self-government within the British Empire to be attained by stages.

Consequently, the official Swaraj Party contested the elections with the programme of non-acceptance of office. This programme does not mean anything unless by not accepting office the Swarajists can render the formation of a ministry impossible. This implies that the Swarajists must have a majority in the legislative bodies in order to carry on their programme. The Swarajists lost the elections. Only in one province they won the majority, and that also of one, of the elected states. This means even in that province a ministry can be formed with the help of the government and nominated members. In other provinces as well as in the central legislative assembly the position is much worse. The Swarajists hoped to win the elections but they could not even maintain the position they had in the last parliament. In a number of provincial legislative councils their number has dwindled to half. In the national legislative assembly they have lost considerable ground.

Under these circumstances, the policy of parliamentary obstruction has become entirely untenable. Everywhere the right-wing bourgeois parties and the dissident Swarajists are ready to form ministries which could not be opposed successfully. In consequence, the Swarajists will be practically eliminated from the political picture. In view of this situation the Swarajist leaders are naturally eager to change their policy. As a matter of fact, already before the elections they had declared that it would be necessary to change the policy if the country so demanded. By 'the country' they meant the electorate representing two per cent of the entire population. 'The country', as represented by the electorate, did not approve of the Swarajist policy of obstruction. Therefore, if the Swaraj Party had a free hand to conduct the nationalist politics at the bidding of the fortunate few enfranchised by the grace of British Imperialism, they would have the National Congress declare that the interests of the nation demanded acceptance of office. This they could not do and herein lies the significance of this year's National Congress.

The revolutionary potentiality of the Nationalist Movement becomes still more noticeable when it is remembered that the President of the Congress had himself declared on the eve of the Congress that non-acceptance of office could not be a policy applicable under all circumstances. He even secured the assistance of Gandhi for his programme of capitulation. For some time, Gandhi had preached the theory that to accept office was the logical conclusion of the Swarajist policy of entering the legislative council. He argued that the Swarajists could not honestly refuse to participate in the responsibility of administration once they entered the legislative bodies. Obviously, the mood of the Congress was threatening. If the leaders had come out with their programme of capitulation as they desired, they would have been faced with a rebellious following dangerously beyond their control. It would certainly have been more beneficial for the Nationalist Movement had the situation been brought to such a climax. In that case, the petty bourgeois revolutionary forces that constitute the rank and file of the Congress would have been completely liberated from the ideological influence of the bourgeois leaders. The Congress would have become a real fighting organization. But, as it is, the situation still remains rather unclear.

As in the previous sessions, this year also there was a resolution before the Congress to change what is called 'The Creed'. The demand was that the Congress should declare complete independence as its goal instead of self-government within the Empire. All the leaders spoke against this resolution—Gandhi being one of them. The defeat of the resolution indicates that the revolutionary wing is still not strong enough to assume the leadership of the movement. But the events in the following weeks, which have been predetermined by the election results, will clarify the situation. The policy of non-acceptance of office and parliamentary obstruction, half-heartedly sanctioned by the Congress, cannot be maintained. The Swaraj Party must make its position clear. There is little doubt which way the leaders will move; except in one province, the Swarajists will not be asked to form a Ministry. In the single province where they had the majority a tacit agreement has already been reached by which the Swarajists will support the ministry formed by the non-Swarajist nationalists. This method will be adopted everywhere. If not formally, the Swarajists will cooperate with the British administration in reality. Attempts will be made to cover this policy of capitulation by radical phraseology, but this will not succeed. The revolutionary following will see through this strategy before long, and what should have been the outcome of this year's Congress will be accomplished, if not before the next year's Congress, certainly then.[2]

Notes

[1] The radical trends became sufficiently assertive during 1927; so much so that at the next annual session of the Congress at Madras not only was a resolution passed to boycott the Statutory (Simon) Commission that had been appointed in November, but the Congress for the first time also declared 'the goal of the Indian people to be complete national independence'. The Complete Independence resolution was moved by Jawaharlal Nehru; according to Sitaramayya (p. 541), Gandhi was absent from the Subjects Committee when this resolution was cleared. However, next year at its Calcutta Session (1928) the Congress, at Gandhi's instance, reverted to the objective of Dominion Status by approving the Constitution drawn up by the Motilal Nehru Committee and recommended by the All-Parties' Conference. The Swaraj Party was in abeyance during the Civil Disobedience movement, but after the suspension of Civil Disobedience in May 1934, the All-India Swaraj Party was revived.

[2] Seshadri Srinivasa Iyengar (1874–1941) who presided over the Gauhati session of the Congress (December 1926) was a highly successful lawyer who resigned from the office of the Advocate General in 1920 and emerged as an important political leader during the 1920s. He led the Congress to victory (45 out of 104 elected members) in Madras Council in the election of 1926 and was himself elected to the Central Assembly where he became Deputy Leader of the Congress (Swaraj) Party. Although at the Gauhati session all formal reference to Civil Disobedience was omitted and although his presidential address closed with the declaration that 'Swaraj is not an intellectual but an emotional proposition', he nevertheless organized in 1928 the Independence League with himself as President and Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose as Secretaries. Owing to persistent differences with both Motilal Nehru and Gandhi he retired from active public life in 1930. SNR

SELECTED WORKS
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18. From *The Masses of India* Vol. II.
19. From *International Press Correspondence* Vol. VI.
20. From *Puti Mirovoi Revoliutsii*.
21. From *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisti cheskii Internasional* (M.N Roy's Mission to China).
22. From *Inprecor* Vol. VII.
23. From *The Masses*. Vol. III.

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* The Significance of the Chinese Revolution—*Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia*, February 1927.

* The Base and the Social Forces of the Revolution—*Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia*, April 1927.

* The Problems of the Chinese Revolution and the Role of the Proletariat—*Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia*, April 1927.

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The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China—*Inprecor*, May 1927.

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* Introduction to *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia* 1927.

The Lessons of the Chinese Revolution—*The Masses*, September–October 1927.

Revolution and Counter-revolution in China—*The Masses*, November 1927.

M. N. Roy was no stranger to China when he went there as chief of a Comintern delegation in January 1927. Eleven years earlier he had moved secretly but quite extensively in China as a revolutionary nationalist negotiating with the rebel leaders of Yunnan and Szechuan for supply of arms across the mountains to his underground comrades in Bengal, and he had met Sun Yat-Sen in that connection in Tokyo. In 1918 he had again tried unsuccessfully to pursue this plan from Mexico. During the early 1920s he came to know some of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party—Ch'en Tu-Hsiu and Liu Yen-Ching, for example, at Comintern Congresses, and others at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) where he was for some time a political director. Reports from and comments on China appeared from time to time in his organ, *The Masses of India,* but more importantly, as his 1930 magnum opus *Revolution und Counter-Revolution in China* amply showed, he made during the 1920s a very systematic and critical study of modern Chinese history, society and politics.

At the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (22 November to 16 December 1926) Roy was elected member-secretary of the Chinese Commission together with Petrov; he was already a member of the Executive Committee, the Secretariat and the Orgbureau of the Comintern. At the Plenum there were very strong differences over China; several drafts of the 'Theses on the Chinese situation' were prepared and rejected; the version finally adopted with Stalin's approval was drawn up jointly by a committee of three which included Roy.

Since the 1830s China had been increasingly subjected to humiliation, aggression and systematic oppression by the Western Powers. Under Dowager Empress Tzu Hsi while brutal enforcement of 'extraterritoriality' reduced China to a semi-colonial status, corruption and growing dissension undermined the authority of the monarch. The fall of the Manchu Dynasty and establishment of the Republic in October 1911, however, did not improve matters. Sun Yat-Sen, who had been trying with little success to develop a nationalist republican movement in China, assumed the provisional presidency in January 1912, but within a month he was forced to relinquish the office to the militarist Yüan Shih-Kai. Sun had founded a secret nationalist group Hsing Chung Hui (Revive China Society) in 1894; this he had merged with another secret society Hua Hsing Hui to form the T'ung Meng Hui (Alliance Society) in 1905; in the same year he had declared in the first issue of its organ *Min Pao* his commitment to the three basic principles of nationalism, democracy and the people's livelihood. In August 1912 the Alliance Society was merged with five other groups to form the Kuomintang. However, all this was of little avail. Yüan officially dissolved the Kuomintang in November 1913; he came to an understanding with the Japanese aggressors, proclaimed himself Emperor (December 1915), and died in June 1916.

For the next fifteen years there was no central authority in China. The country was divided among warlords and provincial governors fighting among themselves. The government in Peking was controlled at different times by different warlords and their shifting alliances. In 1920, Sun formed a Nationalist government in Canton with the help of a warlord, but in 1922 the same warlord turned against him and Sun fled to Shanghai. His efforts to win recognition and assistance from Western Powers did not succeed; they preferred the warlord regime in Peking. The Soviet Union, however, extended him support, and from 1923 when he re-established the Kuomintang government in Canton till his death in March 1925 his reliance on the Soviet Union increased even though he showed no inclination towards communist ideology.

The founders and earliest exponents of communism in China were two radical intellectuals, Ch'en Tu-Hsiu and Li Ta-Chao. Ch'en had studied at Tokyo and Paris, and in September 1915 he had founded in Shanghai his famous review *Ch'ing Nien* (Youth), renamed next year *Hsin Ch'ing Nien* (New Youth). He rejected Confucianism and formulated six guiding principles for the new Chinese youth: 'Be independent, not servile; be a man of progress, not bound by routine and tradition; be brave, not fearful; be internationalist, not isolationist; be practical, not ruled by rituals and formalities; be scientific, not given to fanciful thinking'. In 1917 he was appointed Dean of the School of Letters at the National Peking University, and next year he was joined by Li Ta-Chao, the newly appointed Director of Peking University Library and Professor of History. The powerful student movement of protest which started on 4 May 1919, against the Peking government's acquiescence in Japanese aggression was vigorously supported by Ch'en. He was arrested, spent a few months in prison, and on release moved to Shanghai. Meanwhile he had brought out a special issue of *New Youth* (May 1919) devoted to Marxism, and both he and Li Ta-Chao had become communists.

In 1920 five communist groups had formed in China—at Peking, Shanghai, Canton, Wuhan and Changsha. In July 1921 twelve delegates representing these groups met in the Po Wen Girls' School in the French Concession of Shanghai; they then transferred to a boat on

Lake Chiahsing where they formally constituted the Communist Party of China with Ch'en Tu-Hsiu elected as General Secretary. This founding Congress of the CCP was guided by the Comintern representative, Hendricus Sneevliet (or G. Maring), the Dutch communist leader, who had befriended Roy on his arrival in Europe in 1920. Mao represented Hunan at the founding Congress but did not have any noteworthy role.

From the beginning the CCP lived in the shadow of the Comintern. A succession of Comintern representatives were sent to China to guide the young party and regulate its affairs. The Comintern had a difficult task in seeking to reconcile the *realpolitik* interests of the Soviet State and promotion of revolution abroad. In China the former required recognition of the warlord government in Peking; at the same time it was necessary to support the rival Kuomintang government of Sun Yat-Sen and strengthen the Communist Party. In 1921, Sneevliet had first visited the warlord Wu Pei-Fu at Peking before seeing Sun Yat-Sen at Kweilin; in between he had attended and guided the founding Congress of the CCP. He pressurized the rather reluctant CCP leadership to ally with the Kuomintang and to try to form a 'bloc within' through individual membership. It was, however, with the arrival of Michael Borodin in Canton in September 1923 that the alliance received a strong fillip. Borodin became Sun's most trusted adviser; with the help of Li Ta-Chao and T'an P'ing-Shan, he reorganized the Kuomintang on the Bolshevik model; together with General Galen (Bluecher) he established the Whampoa Military Academy. Here Sun's young follower Chiang Kai-Shek (who had been sent for training to Moscow in 1923) was appointed as Commandant and the Paris-returned communist Chou En-Lai as chief political officer.

The death of Sun Yat-Sen in March 1925 plunged the Kuomintang into a terrible crisis. The leader of its left wing, Liao Chung-K'ai, was assassinated by his right wing opponents. Wang Ching-Wei (close associate of Sun since the time of *Min Pao*) and Chiang Kai-Shek emerged as the principal rivals; both were backed by Moscow and Borodin. Wang was elected Chairman of the Kuomintang and head of the Political and Military Councils of the government; Chiang became head of the army. Borodin's manoeuvres gave to the left wing a three-fifths majority at the Second Kuomintang Congress (January 1926). However, in March 1926, Chiang Kai-Shek struck; he declared Martial Law in Canton, arrested the communists, and his forces surrounded the residences of the Soviet advisers and the headquarters of the trade unions. Unable to exercise his authority over Chiang, Wang relinquished his position and retired temporarily to France. In May

Chiang called a Plenum of the Kuomintang Central Executive which excluded communists from all higher posts, and in July he was elected Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Kuomintang Central Executive. He was also appointed Commander-in-Chief, and in the same month launched the Northern Expedition against the Peking government. Chiang continued to be backed by Moscow while the CCP leadership was confused and divided. Under Borodin's guidance the Central Committee continued to support Chiang Kai-Shek although there was one group which urged withdrawal from Kuomintang and there was another which advocated seizure of Kuomintang leadership through struggle from within.

The Northern Expedition not only strengthened Chiang Kai-Shek but also inspired widespread peasant uprisings against landlords. In November 1926 the National Government moved from Canton to Wuhan, and there was mounting demand for the return of Wang Ching-Wei from self-imposed exile. When Roy reached China early in 1927 events were moving very fast. The principal happenings of 1927 have been mentioned in the chronological outline at the beginning of this volume, and some additional details are provided in my explanatory footnotes to this section. Wang returned from abroad in April and almost immediately issued a joint statement with Ch'en Tu-Hsiu affirming continued Kuomintang Communist collaboration. A few days later Chiang rounded up and carried out executions on a mass scale of communist and labour union workers in Shanghai. In Peking Li Ta-Chao and several other communist leaders were executed by the warlord Chang Tso-Lin. At the fifth Congress of the CCP in Hankow, Roy's advocacy of arming the peasants and adopting a radical programme of agricultural revolution was opposed by Boroding. Mao Tse-Tung, who was expected to support Roy's line in view of his February 'Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan', in fact accepted the position of Chairman of All-China Peasants' League and used his influence and office, at least temporarily, to restrain the rebellious peasants and protect the properties and families of the army officers of the Kuomintang Left. Stalin's cabled instruction of 1 June requiring both collaboration with the Left Kuomintang and agrarian revolution was obviously unworkable. According to Ch'en's subsequent account all members of the CCP Executive voted to support Borodin in shelving Stalin's cable. Roy communicated Stalin's message to Wang reckoning that it would reassure the latter of Moscow's support and persuade him to stand up more firmly against Chiang and the Kuomintant right wing. Wang, however, had already decided to break with the communists. He had attended the CCP Congress as a distinguished guest and had heard the debates. He was opposed to the programme of agrarian revolution and had been told by Borodin that Roy, the prime mover of the programme of agrarian revolution, 'had the complete confidence of Stalin, even more so than himself' (T'ang Leang-Li). In July the government at Wuhan began arresting and executing the communists. Both Borodin and Roy were forced to leave China, but Comintern intervention did not stop with their departure. Under Stalin's instruction the new Comintern representative Besso Lominadze organised in August an uprising in Nanchang which was quickly crushed. At an emergency secret meeting of the CCP leadership Ch'en Tu-Hsiu was censured and, under Soviet pressure, removed from General Secretary's position. Mao Tse-Tung's belated effort to organize the 'Autumn Harvest Uprising' proved to be a costly failure. But far more disastrous was the communist uprising in Canton organized by the Comintern representative Heinz Neumann in December 1927; it was ruthlessly suppressed and about 6,000 communists were slaughtered in four or five days. The rapprochement between Wuhan and Nanking, however, did not last. Wang left for France in December 1927 and Chiang as Commander-in-Chief gained full control of the Kuomintang.

The documents on China which Roy submitted to the Comintern on his return to Moscow were not immediately published. *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, published officially from Moscow and Leningrad in 1929, bore Roy's name as its author; it was soon withdrawn from circulation and Roy was forbidden to publish it in any other language. There is reason to suspect that the manuscript submitted by Roy suffered from excision by censors in Moscow before publication; some documents mentioned by Roy in his later writings are missing from this book. *Kitaiskaia* was written in 1927 and hence selections from it are included in this volume.

Roy continued to write on China in *Inprecor* and *The Masses*, and after his break with the Comintern he wrote out in Germany his monumental work, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*, which was, however, not available in India till 1946. After his arrest on return to India he wrote in jail 'a short account of what really had happened in China' in 1927, and he published it in 1938 under the title *My Experience in China*. I have not come across any official Comintern document condemning Roy specifically for his role in China. In India, however, communists and their 'fellow travellers' concocted and spread all kinds of lies and slanders about him. The position which he actually took on China in 1926–27 may be seen quite clearly in the documents included in this section.

Years after Roy's death two copies of the Moscow edition of *Kitaiskaia* were discovered in the University of California Library and the rare book collection of the Hoover Library at Stanford University. The text was translated from Russian into English by Helen I. Powers and published in 1963 under the title *M. N. Roy's Mission to China: The Communist–Kuomintang Split of 1927,* with a long introduction by Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin. Items from this English translation which are included in the following pages have been marked with asterisks and acknowledged in footnotes. For permission to include them I am grateful to Professor North and the University of California.

Some of the books and articles which have proved particularly useful to me in following the complex developments and controversies of the period are mentioned below:

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Revolutionary Ferment Among the British Indian Occupation Troops in China*

The English have for a long time been making use of a particularly large body of Indians as occupation troops and police for China in order to suppress the local population. Other imperialists are hiring from the English these Indians for their concession areas and settlements in order to use them for their own purposes. The rickshaw coolies and street urchins stand in greater fear of the Indians than of the English and other foreigners.

But these Indian police are now being infected by the strong revolutionary ferment within the Chinese population and by the latter's fight against the imperialists. When, in the past year, the great strikes broke out in Hong Kong and Canton, many of the Indian police abandoned their posts and betook themselves to Canton. Many of the Indian police who remained behind were killed by the English on suspicion of being revolutionary—minded.

On 22 May last the Portuguese in Macao discovered a revolutionary conspiracy among the Indian police who had been hired from the English; whereupon the entire 3rd Battalion of the Indian occupation troops in Hong Kong was disbanded. All the remaining Indian troops were disarmed. In addition to the warships in Hong Kong and Macao, the English are now bringing black troops for their protection. In both of these towns the Indians and Chinese are not allowed to speak of the bacillus of the revolutionary plague.

Since last year there has existed in Canton a Union of Oppressed Peoples in which Chinese, Indians, Koreans and Annamites are represented. The Indians have already accomplished considerable practical work with the help of this Union.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II, No. 9, September 1926, unsigned report. SNR

China and India*

Events of the most serious moment are preparing in China. British imperialism is fully awake to the immense significance of the successes of the Chinese nationalist movement, and now that its hands are no longer fully occupied with internal industrial struggles, it is preparing the way for intervention on a large scale. The *Times* (29 November 1926) sums up the British official view of the Chinese situation.

> Chinese nationalism has now assumed a military, an aggressive and a revolutionary form. It is concentrated in a movement that not only threatens to sweep away or to absorb the various predatory warlords, whose rivalries have been the bane of China, but also to undermine and perhaps, in the end, to destroy those widely ramified foreign interests and enterprises through which China is still attached to the movement of Western civilisation.

The success or failure of the Chinese nationalist struggle is of unparalleled concern for the future of the Indian nationalist movement. Yet for the most part, our nationalist press only summons up sufficient interest to print a few scraps of Chinese news picked up from British newspapers. Indeed not content with ignoring the significance of the events in China, some of our papers do not hesitate to traduce them. They not only copy the anti-Chinese propaganda of British imperialism, but they add lies and slanders of their very own. The Swarajist *Forward* sinks so low in its servility as to begin an editorial note with the statement:

> The British Government has shown commendable patience and forbearance in dealing with China. (*Forward* 24.9.26).

This, written of the bloody hand of British imperialism with its gun boats, bombing and massacres, is indeed gratuitous subservience. The following month we found a note, apparently by the same hand, raising a wail that it is impossible to understand what is happening in China. It says:

> Who is there to represent Chinese interests? Has China any interests to call her own? Canton is yet only ploughing the sands.

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* *The Masses of India*, Vol. II, No. 12, December 1926, from 'Point of View'. SNR

Not that other papers are much better. *The Bombay Chronicle* (1 October 1926) declares that '. . . the root trouble in China is this domineering and bullying attitude of the foreigners'. This is the typical argument of the apologists of imperialism who make a big noise about domineering and so forth, but avoid mentioning the realities of economic exploitation. As if brigandage could be praiseworthy if it was only polite.

China and The Soviet Union*

In answer to the imperialist organ—*The Peking and Tsientsin Times*—which demands the severance of connections with the Union of Soviet Republics as condition of eventual reconcilement between Canton and England, *The Peoples' Tribune* (Kuomintang organ in Peking) writes:

> We have received help from Russia—but it has not come in the form of millions of roubles and thousands of Soviet agents as is the dream of the reactionaries. True, some Soviet citizens are helping the Nationalist Government and the Nationalist armies in the capacities of advisors and instructors and have succeeded in winning the esteem of the administration of Nationalist China. But this circumstance has a secondary importance in comparison with the inspiring help which we received from the great October Revolution. The very fact that the Soviet revolution was victorious has helped, in unmeasured degree, the nationalist movement in China in the same way as it has helped the nationalist movements of other oppressed peoples. The October Revolution has broken the united front of the oppressors, has torn the chains of imperialism and announced to the world the principle which is now guiding the struggle of the Chinese Nationalist movement, namely: the struggle for national freedom against military intervention; the struggle for racial and national equality. Soviet Russia is the only great power which, by its own will, has liquidated the unequal treaties and renounced the special rights and privileges which the Czarist Government had in combination with other imperialist powers. How can the imperialists think that Nationalist China will break with its only true, experienced friend for the nice eyes of the old despotical Great Britain?

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* *The Masses of India* Vol. II, No. 12, December 1926, from 'Notes and News'. SNR

Roy's Speech on the Chinese Question

at the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive of the Communist International, November-December 1926*

Comrades, the Chinese question is certainly the most important question before this Plenum and it involves a series of very important and complicated problems.

Since the Shanghai events of May 1925, the Chinese Revolution has entered into the acutest and most highly developed stage. The revolution of 1911 overthrew the feudal monarchy and laid the foundation for the building up of a new China. The 1911 revolution did not proceed in a straight line. Although the feudal monarchy was destroyed and a democratic republic was established nominally, real democracy was not introduced into the country. Power still remained in the hands of the feudal military class and foreign imperialism remained the dominant political power of the country.

During the war, there was even an attempt to undo this very limited result of the Revolution of 1911. It was the attempt to restore the monarchy, an attempt which was backed by Japanese imperialism. This attempt was frustrated partly by the recrudescence of the revolutionary movement inside the country, and partly owing to the opposition of American and British imperialism which naturally did not want a monarchy to be established in China under the protection of Japanese imperialism. This stage, which might be called the stage of Japanese orientation, was succeeded by the stage of American orientation, which lasted during the latter part of the World War and the years immediately following.

In this period of American orientation the Chinese nationalists looked upon America as the friend of Chinese liberation, but this hope was destroyed after Versailles and as a result of the Washington Conference.

The depression that followed the collapse of American orientation was succeeded by the revolutionary period of the Chinese nationalist movement, the period that began in the great boycott movement of 1920 and eventually left its impression on the mass revolutionary movement, the beginning of which was marked by the Shanghai events. Since the Shanghai strike of May 1925, the Chinese Revolution has developed almost in a spectacular way. To be sure, during this period also the development of the revolutionary forces has not been uninterrupted and in a continually rising line, but the revolution has gone forward, although in a zig-zag line and in the face of tremendous difficulties which it had to overcome.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. VI, No. 91, 30 December 1926, pp. 1603–04.
SNR

The victorious advance of the Chinese Revolution has culminated in the triumphant march of the Nationalist Army towards the North. This has forced a change upon imperialist policy, which should not be overlooked.

As you all know there has been talk of recognition of the Canton Government by Japan, England and the United States. The new imperialist policy has assumed most interesting forms in the case of America. These forms show how extremely dangerous American imperialism is for the Chinese Revolution. American imperialism is trying to recover the moral prestige it enjoyed in China during the period of American orientation of the Chinese nationalist movement. American imperialism wants to introduce in China a liberal, humane imperialism in the place of the old brutal and greedy imperialism; that is, America wants to kill China not with bombs and machine guns, but with kindness. We have to be very careful with such a friend.

This new orientation of imperialism has very close and dangerous connections with the forces inside the Chinese nationalist movement. Looked at from this point of view, we can be in a position to solve the problem of the motive forces behind the Chinese Revolution. Obviously, this new strategy of American imperialism is meant to break the unity of the anti-imperialist front.

Now, which sections of the Chinese population are likely to fall for these new temptations? The burden of imperialist exploitation does not fall uniformly on all portions of the population. To some parts of the population it is only a negative burden, and to some parts it is a positive burden. The imperialist policy of hindering the development of the economic resources of the country deprives the native bourgeoisie of the right to exploit the native labour power. From this point of view, the native bourgeoisie is opposed to imperialism. On the other hand, on whom falls the positive exploitation? On the working class, on the producing masses, the mass that produces value for imperialism.

From this it is very clear that the antagonism between imperialism and the majority of the population is irreconcilable, that it must lead to a fight to the finish one way or the other. But the antagonism which is based on negative exploitation can be reconciled, and the policy of imperialism in China at this time is to find a possible *modus vivendi* with a section of the Chinese bourgeoisie. If the national bourgeoisie determines the progress and tactics of the revolution it will be sabotaged and weakened as a consequence of this new policy of imperialism. Therefore, it is very clear that when we talk about the united anti-imperialist front we have to keep the big bourgeoisie out of account.

Foreign imperialism cannot hold its position in another country unless one section of the native population supports it. Imperialism must have a social basis in the colony. As long as there is not a very broad revolutionary mass movement, it is possible for imperialism to stand on a very narrow base. But now the base of the revolutionary movement in China is enormously broadened; so imperialism, in order to hold its position in China, must also broaden its base proportionately. Naturally, they have to go to that class of native society whose antagonism against imperialism is not irreconcilable; they will seek to broaden the social base by making allies of a certain section of the bourgeoisie. During this period of acute revolutionary development this process has been going on inside the nationalist forces. A section of the bourgeoisie has moved further and further away from the revolution, and in proportion as the revolutionary forces (the proletariat, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie) become more and more revolutionary, the upper strata of the bourgeoisie will move more and more away from the revolution to the extent of making a united front with the imperialists against revolutionary China. This is the situation, and in view of this situation we have to solve the problem of the united anti-imperialist front.

Now, comrades, there is one more point which is also a vital question that has been raised by the Chinese Revolution. That is the agrarian question. The overwhelming majority of the population are the peasants. Consequently, any revolutionary fight against imperialism and for the democratization of the country must depend on the active participation of the peasantry in this fight. The Chinese Revolution in the immediate stages must primarily be an agrarian revolution. In order to mobilize the peasantry and draw them into this united anti-imperialist front, the Communist Party, as well as the Kuomintang, must have an agrarian programme; but in formulating this agrarian programme the basic question has not been touched upon. The programme is formulated only as a programme of action, of immediate demands. For our work among the peasantry, and for our winning of the peasantry over to the side of the revolution, it is necessary to have a programme of action and of immediate demands. But, unless the programme is very clearly laid down, there will always be the danger of opportunist deviations. While formulating an agrarian programme for the Chinese Revolution we must not forget that the question of an agrarian revolution shall be very clearly put. There is the question of the nationalization of land, the confiscation of big landowners' estates. These questions cannot be avoided. They must be put clearly and answered in the negative or in the positive. The central point of the agrarian programme of the Chinese Revolution must be the nationalization of land.

If it is true that the anti-imperialist campaign in China is being organized under the hegemony of the proletariat, if this hegemony of the proletariat is to be strengthened, if the success of the Chinese Revolution depends on the ability of the proletariat to exercise this hegemony, we cannot but admit that the leadership of the peasantry must be in the hands of the proletariat. The Communist Party, the Party of the proletariat, must be the instrument through which this leadership will be exercised. This is apart from the tactical approach to the problem. Various intermediary organization forms may have to be found in order, first, to establish this leadership, and then to exercise the leadership effectively. But this is also a question which has to be cleared up—the Chinese peasantry in the present stage of the social development will be and can be led in the revolutionary fight against imperialism only under the leadership of the proletariat.

There is no question of an immediate Socialist revolution in China or of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the question is, whether the revolution which has for its immediate object the establishment of a democratic government will have to take a uniform line of development no matter in what period of history it takes place. The bourgeois democratic revolution in China which is taking place in 1926 will not follow the same line of development as the democratic revolution of Europe in the middle of the 19th century. The revolution for the democratization of China is taking place in the period of the decline of bourgeois democracy, the decline of capitalism. Today capitalism is a force of counter-revolution on a world scale. Imperialism is trying to create new bases in the colonies and semi-colonial countries as a method of stabilizing its position. The Chinese Revolution as an integral part of the world revolution is a menace to the attempted capitalist stabilization.

Consequently, the theory that the Chinese Revolution, because it is a democratic revolution, must develop under the hegemony, or even under the partial leadership, of the bourgeoisie is false. This being so, the peasantry, which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the nationalist forces, must be led by the working class. If the Communist Party, owing to its present numerical weakness, relative smallness in comparison to the vast population of China, is not yet able to discharge creditably this aspect of its activities, this is no reason to believe that we must seek a new leadership for the Chinese peasantry. The Chinese proletariat, under the Chinese Communist Party, will learn how to lead the peasants in the fight against imperialism for the democratization of the country. The Chinese proletariat, led by the Communist Party in cooperation with the revolutionary proletariat of the Western countries, will be the dominating factor in the struggle for national freedom, will overthrow imperialism, will democratize the country and establish a democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry, which democratic dictatorship will immediately lead up to the struggle against capitalism and for the establishment of Socialism in China.

Social Democracy and the Chinese Revolution*

The uncheckable and victorious march of the Chinese Revolution is a staggering blow to world capitalism. The Chinese Revolution is one of the factors that make the stabilization of world economy on a capitalist basis impossible. Failing to check the development of the revolutionary movement by provoking civil war, imperialism today seeks to sabotage it. The new policy of imperialism is no longer to oppose stubbornly the national liberation movement. The experience of the last two years has shown that this cannot be done. What imperialism endeavours to do now is to see that the Chinese Revolution does not outgrow bourgeois leadership.

It can now be reasonably stated that the success of the national liberation movement in China will not mark the beginning of a period of capitalist development. This perspective of the Chinese Revolution is guaranteed by three factors: 1. the period of general capitalist decline in which it takes place; 2. close proximity and alliance with the U.S.S.R.; and 3. the dominating role played by the working class. It is obviously beyond the power of imperialism to eliminate the first two factors. All efforts are made to free the Chinese Revolution from the infuence of the third factor. The more the Chinese Revolution comes under the leadership of the working class the more clearly it becomes an integral part of the world proletarian revolution and the more pronounced becomes its anti-capitalist perspective. Under this condition, the anxiety of world imperialism is to make the revolution as harmless as possible. This they propose to do by a clever manoeuvre. Instead of fighting the Chinese Revolution as a whole, the new policy is to back up those forces of it which would lead the revolution along the line of capitalist development. The success of the Chinese Revolution as a purely bourgeois democratic revolution would create a new base for world capitalism. If China could be ushered into a period of capitalist development (under the hegemony of imperialist finance), a powerful prop would be added to the tottering structure of world capitalist economy.

The future of the Chinese Revolution will be determined by the class character of its leadership. The development of the Chinese Revolution will largely determine the development of the world revolution. Under the pressure of mass awakening and mass action the national liberation movement during the last two years has developed as a powerful factor against world capitalism. Under the leadership of the proletariat, in alliance with the U.S.S.R., the Chinese Revolution will lead directly towards the struggle for Socialism. Led by the nationalist bourgeoisie, supported by 'liberal' imperialism, it will become a factor of capitalist stabilization.

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* *Inprecor*, Vol. VI, No. 93, 31 December 1926, pp. 1643–4. Signed article. SNR

Since the nationalist occupation of the Yangtze Valley and the debacle of Sun Chuan-Fan, there has been a remarkable change in the imperialist attitude towards China. The press, that but a few weeks ago howled against the Canton Government and called for armed intervention, has become the organ of 'peace and goodwill'. Fire-eating spokesmen of imperialism have put on the garb of friends and well-wishers of the 'New China'. Even such a votary of the policy of the iron hand as Lord Birkenhead has come out as an advocate of reconciliation and 'pacific pursuance of patient methods'. The new British Minister to China made a number of conciliatory speeches on his arrival and proceeded to Hankow to see the Cantonese Foreign Minister. In the interview he protested the 'goodwill' of his government. The revolutionary government of Canton is thus recognized *de facto* by the bitterest enemy of the Chinese National Liberation movement as the real government of the country.

These are all very significant facts, indicating which way the wind is blowing. In order to prevent the Chinese Revolution developing along the lines of a struggle for Socialism, the imperialists are forced to recognize the necessity of allowing China that much political freedom as would lead to capitalist development of the country. The problematical success of this policy would not injure imperialism. On the contrary, it would strengthen the position of world capitalism.

Once more, on the Chinese question, we find international social democracy enthusiastically supporting the policy of capitalist stabilization. On his return from the pleasure trip in the Sahara, MacDonald advocated the policy of helping the birth of 'new (capitalist) China'. The burden of an interview that he gave to the *Daily Herald* was 'for industrial as well as political reasons we cannot afford to allow ourselves to be represented to the Chinese as the black devil of the whole piece'. A few days before, Lord Birkenhead had expressed the same sentiment—'pacific pursuance of patient methods to safeguard the great trading and financial interests that we have in that region (China)'. It is remarkable how MacDonald approaches the Chinese question (as any other question) exactly from the same angle as Lord Birkenhead. In view of the dangerous revolutionary situation imperialist policy in China should be such as would safeguard the trading and financial interests of capitalism. This view is shared equally by the leader of the Second International and of the die-hard wing of the British Tory Government!

In the same interview, MacDonald pleaded for the abolition of the system of unequal treaties and concessions on the ground that that system 'has outlived its usefulness and its advantage to us'. The true colour of social democracy could not be possibly shown more clearly. The policy of bullying, dividing, dismembering China was fully justified as long as it was 'useful and advantageous for us', that is, British capitalism. It is remarkable how frankly MacDonald identifies himself and the entire British social democracy with British imperialism. Now MacDonald pleads the case of helping 'New China', also actuated by the same motive—to protect the interests of British capitalism. He even does not leave this motive of his to be deduced. He puts the case very clearly. 'I am sure if this policy is followed the somewhat short-visioned business men who now deplore it will in very short time praise it for its admirable results'.

The forces of proletarian revolution and world capitalism are marshalled for a grand battle in China. Social Democracy steps in not to lead the forces of world revolution, but to advise the bourgeoisie how to overcome the difficulty and make counter-revolution victorious. On the Chinese question, Social Democracy proves itself once more to be the enemy of the proletariat and a willing instrument of capitalism.

Theses on the Chinese Situation*

Adopted by the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the
Executive Committee of the Communist International,
December 1926

I. Imperialism and the Chinese Revolution

1. The Chinese Revolution is one of the most important and powerful factors that disturb capitalist stabilization. During the last two years, imperialism has suffered a heavy defeat in China, the effects of which will make the crisis of world capitalism more acute. As a result of the victorious advance of the Nationalist Army towards the North (of China), imperialist domination has practically been swept off half the country.

The further victories of the revolutionary armies of Canton, supported by the broad masses of the Chinese people, will lead to the victory over imperialism, to the achievement of the independence of China and to its revolutionary unification, which will consequently increase its power of resistance to imperialist influence.

The failure of Sun Ch'uan-Fang to stop the advance of the Canton Army has convinced the imperialist powers that the traditional method of using the native war-lords as instruments to crush the

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* Translated from *Puti Mirovoi Revoliutsii*. Sedmoi Rasshirenny Plenum Ispolnitelnovo Komiteta Kommunistischeskovo Internatsionala 22 Noyabrya - 16 Dekabrya 1926. Stenograficheskii Otchet. 2 Vols. Moscow, 1927; Vol. II, pp. 435–449.

The Russian text of the Theses is also included in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v documentakh 1919–32*, ed. Bela Kun, Moscow 1933, pp. 668–80. English versions were published in *The Masses of India*, Vol. III, Nos. 6 & 7, June and July 1927, and *The Communist*, London, Vol. I, No. 2, March 1927. A fresh translation of the Russian text in English by Helen I. Powers is included in Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*, University of California 1963, pp. 131–45. Jane Degras gave a translation of selected extracts from the Theses in *The Communist International 1919–43 Documents*, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, London 1971, Vol. II, pp. 338–48.

The preliminary draft of the Theses was prepared by A. S. Bubnov, F. F. Raskolnikov and G. M. Voitinsky. There were strong differences in the ECCI; four drafts and two reports were submitted; eventually the version which was adopted with Stalin's backing was drafted by Roy, Bukharin and Bubnov. (Robert C. North, *Moscow and Chinese Communists*, Stanford 1965, pp. 90–91; Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, II, pp. 337–38.) It is included in the *Selected Works* since Roy was one of its co-authors. In 1926 Roy was a member of the Presidium of the ECCI, Chairman of the Eastern Commission, member of the Orgbureau and Secretariat, member of the British and Agrarian Commissions, and Joint Secretary of the Chinese Commission.SNR national revolutionary movement has become antiquated. At the same time mutual rivalry does not permit the imperialist powers to unite for open military intervention. Imperialism seeks new methods to meet the new situation. The new policy tends towards recognition of the Canton Government. American imperialism takes the initiative in this direction. Even England and Japan are considering recognition of the Canton Government as within the realm of practical politics. These are but diplomatic manoeuvres which cover sinister imperialist designs against the revolution.

2. The basic power of imperialism in China lies in its monopoly of the entire financial and industrial life of the country. (Monopoly of the salt tax, mortgage of customs revenue, railways, waterways, mines, heavy industries—all are mostly owned by foreign capital). If this solid base can be maintained, imperialism will find in China a great help for the stabilization of the capitalist system. With her great population China is a market of unlimited potentialities. She may provide a very fruitful field for the investment of capital if the necessary political protection for this investment is guaranteed. Her enormous sources of raw material have hardly been tapped. Consequently, imperialism will make desperate efforts to crush the Chinese Revolution which threatens to overthrow it. Failing to crush it by the traditional method of provoking civil wars or by eventual armed intervention, imperialism will endeavour to hinder the movement for national liberation which develops along revolutionary lines.

In spite of the mutual antagonism among the imperialist powers the possibility of armed intervention still remains. Foreign intervention takes a peculiar form in China. Under present conditions imperialism prefers to intervene by means of organizing civil wars and by financing counter-revolutionary forces against the revolution. Even at this moment attempts are made to unite the forces of Chang Tso-Lin, Wu P'ei-Fu and Sun Ch'uan-Fang against the advancing Nationalist Army. It is obvious that this united counter-revolutionary front will be formed under the direction and with the help of imperialism. The victory of the revolution in China will mean such a severe blow to world capitalism that the imperialist powers will try by every means to crush it.

3. From the point of view of external conditions the Chinese Revolution—by the mere fact of its anti-imperialist character—is an inseparable part of the international revolution. This circumstance is combined with the following important factors in China favourable for the further development and intensification of the Chinese Revolution:

(a) Mutual rivalries of the imperialist powers in China, which weaken the position of world imperialism;

(b) The crisis of world capitalism;

(c) The growth of the proletarian movement in Western Europe. An open armed intervention in China is sure to be resisted by the working class in the imperialist countries;

(d) The development of national-revolutionary movements in the colonies which, in their turn, must grow as a result of the influence of the further development of the Chinese Revolution;

(e) The existence of the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R., the geographical propinquity of the latter to China and the remoteness of China from the principal centres of the economic, military and political power of the imperialist States.

II. Social Forces of the Chinese Revolution and their Regrouping

4. Side by side with the rapid development of the national revolutionary movement the social forces involved in it are thrown into an equally rapid process of regrouping. The national revolution in China develops amidst peculiar conditions which radically distinguish it from the classical bourgeois revolutions of Europe in the last century as well as from the 1905 revolution in Russia.

The principal distinguishing feature is the semi-colonial state of China and its dependence upon foreign imperialism. Another factor that distinguishes the Chinese Revolution from the bourgeois democratic revolutions of the past is that it is taking place in a period of world revolution as an integral part of the world-wide movement for the overthrow of capitalist society. This factor will determine the history of the Chinese Revolution and the grouping of the social forces involved.

The class forces of the Chinese Revolution develop on the background of extreme economic backwardness, which is the result of the low state of development of industrial capitalism, the primitive technique employed in agriculture, the incredibly low standard of life of the overwhelming masses of the Chinese population and the numerous survivals of a semi-feudal character which are being destroyed by the pressure of the revolutionary armies, which are drawn into the struggle of the toilers of the town and country.

The principal feature of the present economic state of China is the variety of economic forms prevailing in the country, ranging from finance capital to the economic survivals of patriarchal tribal society, the predominant form, however, being merchant capital and petty manufacture and home industry in town and country.

This to some extent hinders the process of class differentiation, and explains the inadequate state of organization of the principal social-political forces of the national revolution.

Of equal importance is the process of collapse of the central apparatus of the State, which has been going on since the interrupted revolution of 1911 and with greater acceleration in the last few years, and the establishment in a considerable portion of the country of the domination of the military-political organizations of Chinese militarism.

Chinese militarism represents a socio-political force which, at the present time, dominates over a large portion of the territory of China. The peculiar feature of Chinese militarism is that, while it represents a military organization, it is also one of the principal channels of primitive capitalist accumulation in China, resting upon a whole system of State organs of a semi-feudal character. The existence of the State organization of Chinese militarism is determined by the semi-colonial state of the country, the dismemberment of the territory of China, the backwardness of Chinese economy and the extreme state of agrarian over-population in the rural districts of the country.

The development of the national revolutionary movement in China at the present time rests upon the agrarian revolution. The economy of the Chinese village presents a picture of numerous survivals of a semi-feudal character closely interwoven with elements of developing capitalism.

The extreme backwardness of Chinese economy generally, the manner in which landed property is divided up into minute allotments, the fact that an enormous proportion of the agrarian population are tenant-farmers or semi-tenant-farmers, the primitive state of technique both in small and large agricultural enterprises, the extreme agrarian over-population, and the process of class differentiation going on in the villages render the general situation in the rural districts of China extremely complicated.

As a consequence of objective circumstances, the class struggle in the rural districts of China reveals a tendency to develop in the following directions: against foreign imperialism, against Chinese militarism, against the survivals of large land ownership, against the petty-squire landowners—the so-called gentry—against the merchant usurer capitalists, and against the upper wealthy strata of the village.

5. The successive stages of development of the revolutionary movement in China are marked by important regroupings of social forces. In the first stage, the driving force of the movement was the national bourgeoisie, intellectuals and students which sought support in the ranks of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie.

In the second stage the character of the movement changed—its social basis was shifted to a different class combination. New and more revolutionary forms of struggle developed. The working class (particularly the industrial proletariat) appeared on the arena as a political factor of first class importance.

Economic strikes are merging into political struggles against imperialism and are acquiring an exceptionally important world historical significance. The proletariat is forming a bloc with the peasantry (which is actively taking up the struggle for its interests) with the petty urban bourgeoisie and a section of the capitalist bourgeoisie. This combination of forces found its political expression in corresponding groups in the Kuomintang and in the Canton Government. Now the movement is at the beginning of the third stage on the eve of a new class combination. In this stage the driving forces of the movement will be a bloc of still more revolutionary nature—of the proletariat, peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie, to the exclusion of a large section of the big capitalist bourgeoisie. This does not mean that the whole bourgeoisie as a class will be excluded from the arena of the struggle for national emancipation, for besides the petty and middle bourgeoisie, even certain strata of the big bourgeoisie may, for a certain period, continue to march with the revolution.

At this stage, the hegemony of the movement passes more and more into the hands of the proletariat.

In this transition of the national liberation movement to an acute revolutionary stage, the bourgeoisie see that under the leadership of the proletariat the anti-imperialist struggle is getting beyond their control and objectively menaces their class interests. They endeavour to regain their leadership with the object of crushing the revolution. They try to influence the movement with the ideology of bourgeois nationalism as against the ideology of the class struggle.

6. Parallel to this regrouping of the class forces of revolution proceeds the crystallization of the forces of counter-revolution. This process in its turn is closely related to and influenced by imperialist politics just as the development of the revolutionary forces is related to and influenced by the forces of world revolution (the U.S.S.R. and Western Proletariat).

Chang Tso-Lin, Wu P'ei-Fu, and Sun Ch'uan-Fang attempt to unify their forces to oppose the victorious revolutionary movement. This counter-revolutionary bloc is formed under the influence and with the aid of imperialism. The big industrial bourgeoisie reveal increasing signs of vacillation and become inclined towards an agreement with foreign capitalists leaving to the latter the role of a dominating agent.

Finding that the militarists are not fully effective instruments for crushing the revolutionary movement, imperialism seeks new allies within the national movement by means of the policy of reconciliation. It attempts to induce the national bourgeoisie to break away from the revolutionary bloc. To strengthen the position of the imperialists' agents within the national movement, some sections of the big bourgeoisie and even militarists, who uptil now have avoided or even condemned the national-revolutionary struggle, have begun to pass to the side of the Canton government. The object of this move is to wrest the leadership of the national-revolutionary movement from the revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, peasantry, and urban petty bourgeoisie, and thereby to stem the tide of the revolution. World imperialism stands behind all these manoeuvres of the counter-revolutionary forces.

In this transitional period, when the gradual abandonment of the revolution by the big bourgeoisie is historically inevitable, the proletariat must, of course, make good use of such bourgeoisie as remain actively engaged in the revolutionary struggle against imperialism and militarism.

On the other hand, the proletariat and the Party must utilize by tactical moves the antagonisms both among the bourgeoisie who are abandoning the revolution, and among the various imperialist groups, all without losing sight of the principal aims, to which it must subordinate all its strategic manoeuvres and tactical moves.

III. The General Perspectives of the Chinese Revolution

7. Looked at from the point of view of class groupings the general perspectives of the Chinese Revolution become very clear. Although historically the Chinese Revolution in its present stage of development is a bourgeois democratic revolution, it is bound to assume a wider social character. The outcome of the Chinese Revolution will not necessarily be the creation of political and social conditions conducive to the capitalist development of the country. Taking place in the period of capitalist decline it forms part of the general struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism. The structure of the revolutionary State will be determined by its class basis. It will not be a purely bourgeois democratic State. The State will represent democratic dictatorship of the proletariat, peasantry and other exploited classes. It will be a revolutionary anti-imperialist government of what represents a transition to non-capitalist (Socialist) development.

The Communist Party of China must exert all its efforts to realize this revolutionary perspective of transition to non-capitalist development. Otherwise, i.e., in the event of a victory of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat and the restoration of the leading role of the bourgeoisie, the actual domination over the country will pass into the hands of the foreign imperialists, although this domination may take new forms.

8. The future development and the perspective of the Chinese Re-

volution are primarily dependent on the role of the proletariat. The events of the last two years have proved that a revolutionary fighting national front can be organized only under the leadership of the proletariat. The struggle against the hegemony of foreign capital can be successfully carried on only under the hegemony of the proletariat. This is the basic principle determining the tactics of the Chinese Revolution.

The feudal military cliques that exercise political power over a considerable part of the country represent forces of reaction and are agents of imperialism. The native bourgeoisie is comparatively undeveloped and weak as a class. The economically strongest section of the bourgeoisie (financiers and compradores) are so closely connected with foreign capitalism through commercial and financial bonds that they have never participated in the anti-imperialist struggle. The industrial bourgeoisie marched with the national revolutionary movement so long as it preserved a purely bourgeois democratic character; but on the first signs of revolution they either desert the revolutionary cause or manoeuvre to sabotage it. The petty bourgeoisie (middle class intellectuals, students, artisans, small traders, etc.), constitute a revolutionary force in a country like China. They have played an important role in the past and will do so in the future. But they are not able to act independently; they must either march with the bourgeoisie or with the proletariat. When the bourgeoisie desert the revolution or conspire against it, the exploited middle classes come under the revolutionary influence of the proletariat. Under these conditions the moving force of the Chinese Revolution in its present stage is the revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. The proletariat is the dominating factor of this bloc.

IV. National Revolution and the Peasantry

9. In the present transitional stage of the development of revolution the agrarian question assumes the acutest form. It is the central point of the present situation. The class which will boldly tackle this basic question and be able to give a radical answer to it will be the leader of the revolution. Under given conditions in China the proletariat is the only class that is in a position to carry on the radical agrarian policy which is a condition for the successful outcome of the anti-imperialist struggle and further development of the revolution.

The power of Chinese militarism lies in the support, on the one hand, of foreign imperialism and on the other hand, of the native landowning classes. The domination of the militarists is based on the semi-feudal system of bondage, oppression and exploitation of hundreds of millions of peasants by the military bureaucratic apparatus of power, the landlords, the gentry and the merchant usurer capitalists. It is a system which is based on the total lack and shortage of land among the peasants who are thus compelled to place themselves in bondage to the landlords and usurers or fill the ranks of the millions of coolies in the towns and in the armies. The tasks of overthrowing the tyranny of the imperialists and the abolition of all survivals of old feudal relations, the task of national liberation, the struggle for the revolutionary reform of internal social relations—these are organically connected with each other and represent the single task of the Chinese revolution.

10. A peculiar feature of the present situation is its transitional character, in which the proletariat must choose between the perspective of a bloc with a considerable section of the bourgeoisie and the perspective of further strengthening its own alliance with the peasantry. If the proletariat will not put forward a radical agrarian programme, it will fail to attract the peasantry into the revolutionary struggle and lose the hegemony in the national liberation movement. The bourgeoisie under the direct or indirect imperialist influence will regain the leadership of the movement. This eventuality, in the present conditions, will mean strengthening the position of foreign capital in China—stabilization of imperialism.

The National Government of Canton will not be able to retain power, the revolution will not advance towards the complete victory over foreign imperialism and native reaction, unless national liberation is identified with agrarian revolution. The growing process of class differentiation and the severe struggle resulting therefrom must receive the closest attention of the Communist Party which must take command of the peasant movement and develop it by means of economic and political slogans suitable to the situation.

11. The programme of the agrarian revolution must bear a concrete form in the territories under the authority of the Kuomintang National Government. The Communist Party of China and the Kuomintang must immediately carry out the following measures in order to bring over the peasantry to the side of the revolution:

(a) Reduce rents to a minimum;

(b) Abolish the numerous forms of taxes imposed upon the peasantry and introduce a single progressive agricultural tax;

(c) Regulate to the maximum and reduce to the utmost the burden of taxation now being borne by the principal masses of the peasantry;

(d) Confiscate all monasterial and church lands and land belonging to the reactionary militarists, compradores, landlords and gentry who are carrying on civil war against the Kuomintang National Government;

(e) Guarantee perpetual leases to the tenant farmer of the land which he cultivates and the fixing of maximum rents jointly by the peasant unions and the representatives of the revolutionary authorities;

(f) The Canton Government must render the utmost support to the interests of the peasantry, and particularly protect the peasants from the oppression and encroachments of the landlords, gentry and usurers;

(g) Disarm the Min-t'uan and other armed forces of the landlords;

(h) Arm the poor and middle peasants and subordinate all armed forces in the rural districts to the revolutionary authorities;

(i) The government shall give maximum support to the peasant organizations, including the peasant unions;

(j) Grant loans to the peasantry, at low interest; determined measures to be taken to suppress usury and support to be given to the various peasant mutual aid organizations;

(k) State aid to the co-operatives and similar mutual aid organizations.

12. It is the task of the Communist Party to see that the Canton Government enforces these measures as a transition to a more developed stage of agrarian revolution. This very important task will be carried on through the organization of peasant committees under Communist leadership. In course of the development of the revolution the peasant committees will assume the authority and power needed for the enforcement of the above demands and intensify the struggle by putting forward more radical demands. The peasants' committees will be the basis of the People's Government and the People's Army in the rural areas.

In the parts of the Country still controlled and dominated by reactionary militarists the task of the Communist Party is to lead the peasantry against feudalism, militarism and imperialism. In those areas revolutionary work among the peasantry is of particularly great importance because this will be the surest way of disintegrating the reactionary armies. Communists must utilize all the spontaneously arising peasant organizations like the 'Red Spears' and strengthen their influence among them.

13. The attitude of the peasantry towards the revolution is largely determined by the behaviour and action of the nationalist armies. It is by the good or bad behaviour of the revolutionary armies that the peasantry judge the nature of the new government. Upon the conduct of the revolutionary army, upon its attitude towards the peasantry and landlords, upon its readiness to assist the peasantry depends the attitude of the peasantry towards the new government. It is a fact that the revolutionary army in China is enthusiastically welcomed by the peasant masses whenever it comes. But it is also a fact that this en-

thusiasm subsides in course of time. Exigencies of a prolonged and difficult military campaign impose additional burdens on the peasantry. The enthusiastic support given by the peasantry to the revolutionary armies will be durable if the Communists and other revolutionary elements leading the movement will know how to compensate the temporary burdens imposed upon the peasantry by a correct and bold agrarian policy. The revolutionary armies will strike root in the peasant masses as the standard bearer of agrarian revolution.

V. The Communist Party and the Kuomintang

14. The supreme necessity of influencing the peasantry also determines the relation of the Communist Party to the Kuomintang and its relation to the Canton Government. The apparatus of the National Revolutionary Government provides a very effective way to reach the peasantry. The Communist Party must use this apparatus.

In the newly liberated provinces State apparatuses of the type of the Canton Government will be set up. The task of the Communists and their revolutionary allies is to penetrate into the apparatus of the new government so as to give practical expression to the agrarian programme of national revolution. This will be done by using the State apparatus for the confiscation of land, reduction of taxes, investment of real power in the peasant on the basis of a revolutionary programme.

15. In view of this and many other equally important reasons the point of view that the Communist Party must leave the Kuomintang is incorrect. The whole process of development of the Chinese Revolution, its character and its perspectives demand that the Communists must stay in the Kuomintang and intensify their work in it. In order to intensify their activities inside the Kuomintang with the object of pushing the revolutionary movement to higher stages of development the Communists should enter the Canton Government. Since its foundation, the real power of the Canton Government has been in the hands of the Right Wing Kuomintang (five out of the six commissars belong to the Right Wing). In spite of the fact that the Canton Government could not exist without the support of the working class, the workers' and peasants' movement even in the Kwantung province laboured under various obstacles. Latest events have shown that the Communists must enter the Canton Government in order to support the revolutionary Left Wing in its struggle against the weak and vacillating policy of the Right. The extension of the authority of the Canton Government to a considerably larger territory of the country makes the question of the participation of the Communists in the National Government still more imperative.

16. The Communist Party of China must strive to develop the

Kuomintang into a real Party of the people—a solid revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the other oppressed and exploited classes which must carry on a decisive struggle against imperialism and its agents. For this the Communist Party must work on the following lines:

(a) Systematic and determined struggle against the Right Wing and Tai Chi-T'ao ideology and their strivings to convert the Kuomintang into a bourgeois party;

(b) Definite formation of a Left Wing and establishment of close cooperation with it. The leadership of this Left Wing should not be mechanically captured by the Communists;

(c) Consistent criticism of the centre which is vacillating between the Right and Left Wings—between the further development of the revolution and compromise with imperialism.

VI. The Tasks of the Chinese Revolution and the Character of the Revolutionary Government

17. Lenin wrote: 'While formerly, prior to the epoch of world revolution, movements for national liberation were a part of the general democratic movements, now however, after the victory of the Soviet Revolution in Russia and the opening of the period of world revolution, the movement for national liberation is part of the world proletarian revolution.'

The programme of the Chinese Revolution and the structure of the revolutionary State created by it should be determined from the point of view of this conception. The process of class differentiation that follows the development of the revolutionary movement bears out this conception. The Canton Government, in spite of its bourgeois democratic character, essentially and objectively contains the germ of a revolutionary petty bourgeois State—a democratic dictatorship of the revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeois democratic movement becomes revolutionary in China because it is an anti-imperialist movement. The Canton Government is a revolutionary State primarily because of its anti-imperialist character. Being primarily anti-imperialist, the Chinese Revolution and the government evolving out of it must strike at the root of imperialist power in China. Repudiation of unequal treaties and abolition of the territorial concessions will not be sufficient to weaken the position of imperialism. The blow must be dealt at the economic basis of imperialist power. This means the revolutionary government must eventually confiscate the railways, concessions, factories, mines, banks, business houses owned by foreign capital. By this act it will immediately outstrip the narrow boundary of bourgeois democracy and enter into the stage of transition to a revolutionary dictatorship.

Thus, it is a mistake to limit the immediate tasks of the Chinese Revolution to (1) overthrow of imperialism, and (2) liquidation of the remnants of feudalism, on the ground that in the first stage this revolution bears a bourgeois democratic nature. The Chinese Revolution cannot overthrow imperialism without proceeding beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy. In the present conditions in China the proletariat will lead the peasantry in the revolutionary struggle. A movement for the liquidation of feudalism led under proletarian hegemony is bound to become an agrarian revolution. In view of these peculiarities of the situation the tasks of the Chinese Revolution become:

(a) Nationalization of railways and waterways;

(b) Confiscation of large enterprises, mines and banks having the character of foreign concessions;

(c) Nationalization of land, to be realized by successive radical reform measures enforced by the revolutionary State.

VII. The Communist Party and the Proletariat

18. To play the dominant role in the revolution the Chinese proletariat must solidify its class organization—political and economic. To organize and train the proletariat for this historic role is the primary task of the Communist Party. The numerical weakness and youthfulness of the Chinese proletariat must be counter-balanced by the strength of organization and clarity of ideas.

The Chinese Federation of Trade Unions embracing 1,200,000 industrial workers as well as the national railwaymen's and seamen's unions are the basis of the Communist Party. To strengthen these organizations by drawing in broader masses of workers is the immediate task of the Communist Party. In the national revolutionary struggle of the last two years the working class has displayed tremendous power. In actual struggle it has won the hegemony in the revolutionary movement. On the basis of these traditions and achievements the working class organizations must be further strengthened and developed on the following lines:

(a) Creation of mass industrial unions, unification of all unions on an industrial basis, strengthening of the Chinese Federation of Trade Unions; (b) intensification of work among the masses, strengthening of contact of the leading trade union organs with the wide masses of Chinese workers; attraction into the trade unions of handicraft workers as well as industrial workers and artisans and those working in small enterprises and cultural-educational workers; (c) greater attention to the economic struggle of the workers which should be combined with the political struggle; elaboration of tactics for the strike movement; organization of mutual aid and strike funds; support in the formation of co-operatives, etc; (d) intensification of educational work among the masses and denouncing the methods of the reformists before the masses of the workers; (e) strengthening of contact between the Chinese trade union movement and the world trade union movement, especially the trade union movement of the Far Eastern countries.

19. In order to attract the bulk of the working class into the movement and strengthen its position in the national revolution, the Chinese Communist Party should agitate for the realization of the following demands:

(a) Complete freedom of activity of the revolutionary peasants' and workers' organizations; legalization of the trade unions; enactment of advanced trade union laws; right to strike;

(b) Labour legislation; eight-hour day; weekly day of rest; minimum wage.

(c) Social legislation: sanitary inspection of working conditions; housing; insurance against illness, injury, disablement, unemployment; protection of labour of women and children; prohibition of night work for women; prohibition of child labour under 14 years of age in factories;

(d) Institution of factory inspection;

(e) Abolition of the system of fines and corporal punishment;

(f) Withdrawal of all kinds of military units and police detachments from the factory premises;

(g) Measures to deal with unemployment; extension of trade union influence over the unemployed; organization of labour exchanges by trade unions.

20. At the present stage a great reservoir of revolutionary energy which has not been fully utilized is that of the artisans and handicraft workers who comprise the majority of the population of the Chinese towns. These are ruined by imperialism and are hostile towards the oppression by foreign capitalism. The Communist Party must extend its influence to these workers with the object of drawing them into the common stream of the national revolutionary movement. Particularly, for this purpose the Communist Party in relation to these strata must strive to secure the following: (1) the alleviation of tax burdens; (2) organization of handicraft and artisan workers' unions; (3) organization of labour cartels.

VIII. The Organizational Tasks of the Communist Party in China

21. The Communist Party of China is an organized force. It has its

leaders, it is establishing its cadres and is leading the masses. The work of the Communist Party of China has acquired a fairly considerable sweep and a stable form of organization. During the last half year, the Party has considerably increased numerically, the greater proportion of the new members being workers.

The peasants are not drawn in the Party in sufficient number. Nevertheless, the Party at the present time is increasing its activities among the peasantry.

One of the most important tasks which confronts the Chinese Party at the present time is the task of widening, intensifying and improving the work of the Party training.

The Party has done considerable work in organizing the Young Communist League. The Young Communist League of China recently has grown numerically and is active in a number of branches of work. The youth is a tremendous revolutionary force in China. The revolutionary students, the young workers and the peasant youth, all these represent a force which could make the revolution advance rapidly if they were subordinated to the intellectual and political influence of the Communist Party. No one realizes the imperialist oppression so profoundly and sensitively, no one realizes the necessity to fight this oppression so acutely as does the youth. This circumstance must be taken into account by the Communist Party of China.

One of the fundamental tasks of the Party is to fight for the right to exist openly.

22. Systematic work must be conducted for recruiting new members, principally in the industrial districts. The new members must be trained by means of short-term courses, special lectures on the question of programme and tactics and also by drawing them into the everyday work in their respective nuclei, and through the latter in the general Party work.

It is necessary to develop collective leadership in the Party in all stages of the Party organization from the Central Committee to the factory and street nuclei. Party leadership must be strengthened by energetically drawing in the best Party workers.

Persistent efforts must be made to strengthen and increase the Party cadres. Special attention must be paid to training nucleus secretaries, leaders of fractions and mass organizations, and the leading personnel of district and regional Party committees. The Central Committee and regional committees must have permanent travelling instructors, who shall be selected from among the best of the local Party workers.

Cadres of travelling organisers must be established for work in the rural districts.

Increased activity and initiative must be encouraged among the lower Party organizations, nuclei and general meetings of Party members, etc.

The fractions particularly in the trade unions, in the leading organs of the peasant leagues and local organizations of the Kuomintang must be strengthened. Systematic, firm Party guidance of the work of the fractions must be maintained.

The Significance of the Chinese Revolution*

We are living in an epoch of the downfall of capitalism. At first glance, it might seem that capitalism has overcome the post-war crisis by a series of measures lowering the standard of living of the working class. In certain countries, there are obvious signs of the flourishing of capitalism. This is particularly conspicuous in Germany. However, with the exception of the United States of America and, in part, Japan, the stabilization of capitalism is but a temporary phenomenon. Even in the United States, the flowering of capitalism has already reached its peak, and the first signs of decline are noticeable.

The fact that the Chinese revolution is occurring in an epoch of the decline of capitalism is itself a fundamental determinant of the character and import of this revolution.

Any social system that happens to be in contradiction with progress is doomed to destruction. Capitalism has long ago ceased to be an instrument of progress and has become a definitely reactionary force, an impediment to civilization, a curse on humanity. Capitalism, in its most highly developed form, that is, imperialism, has led to colonial plunder, to the enslavement of millions of human beings, to the most brutal form of economic exploitation and political slavery. It has obstructed social progress in a series of countries that make up a large part of the earth. It has led to wars of conquest, to plunder and coercion. And the end result was a world conflagration which erupted in 1914. Capitalism has become a destructive force. In its place must come a new social order to permit the continuation of human progress. All over the world the forces of a great revolution are beginning to develop, a revolution that will liberate the human society from the oppressive clutches of capitalism and build a new world on the ruins of the old. One of these forces is the revolt of colonial peoples. The Chinese revolution is the most advanced and the most intense expression of this force. That is why the fundamental significance of the national-liberation movement in China is that it is an integral part of the world revolution which will abolish the exploitation of man by man and put an end to national oppression and class supremacy.

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* Article written by Roy at Canton, 22 February 1927 and included in *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*. This and other items from *Kitaiskaia* in this section of volume II were translated by Helen I. Powers and included in R. C. North and X. J. Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*. Reproduced here with the permission of the Regents of the University of California (1986) and Professor North. SNR

The Chinese revolution poses a potent challenge to the stabilization of capitalism. It has already dealt cruel blows to British foreign trade. Its successes are ruining the plans of the imperialist powers whose aim is to ensure the stabilization of the capitalist system.

Capitalism is now undergoing an unparalleled crisis. It is a crisis at once of overproduction and underproduction. In recent years, the industrial productive capacity of all major capitalist countries has grown tremendously. This occurred as a result of attempts to lower the prime cost of production by improving the techniques of production. But at the same time, actual production is far below the production capacity. The world market has narrowed down considerably. The destruction wrought by the imperialist war lowered the level of consumption in a number of countries. In many countries, the credit system was destroyed by post-war inflation. Depressed wages and heavy taxes, brought about by the necessity of liquidating war debts and defraying the enormous expenses of post-war militarism, lowered to a considerable extent the buying power of the people in the majority of industrial countries. As a result, the goods that are produced cannot be sold at a sufficiently high profit, whereas the goods that the people need most of all are not accessible to them in spite of the enormous growth of the general industrial capacity of the world industry. This situation typifies most vividly the vicious circle in which capitalist production finds itself.

Capitalism sees only two ways out of this vicious circle: to lower the standard of living of the proletariat in its parent country and to increase the exploitation of the cheap labour force of the colonial masses. Imperialism is feverishly seeking its salvation in these two paths. But every step it takes in one direction or another worsens its position and amounts to merely one more revolution of the vicious circle. Lowered wages destroy the domestic market and serve to intensify the industrial crisis, to increase unemployment, and to push the proletariat further into the path of revolution. Utilization of the cheap labour force in the colonies can be increased only if the colonies are industrialized. If industrialization could be accomplished by the capital exported from imperialist countries, it would mark a big step forward in the direction of stabilizing world capitalism. But this, too, cannot be accomplished. The accumulation of capital in all imperialist countries, with the exception of the United States of America, has undergone a sharp decline mainly because of the militarization of the basic branches of industry during the war and to the long fall-off in trade following the war. Furthermore, colonial industrialization displaces from colonial markets the goods produced by the parent country. The intensification of contradictions between industrial and finance capital leads to violent clashes which undermine the foundation of parliamentary governments.

The imperialist policy in China is determined by this intertwining of contradictory economic interests that lie at the basis of international politics. Trade with China is an important factor in the stabilization of world capitalism. For those countries which have export capital, China will prove to be an extremely profitable market for investments. The ostensibly liberal policy of the government of the United States can be ascribed to two circumstances: (1) American manufacturers are soliciting trade with China, and (2) American financiers are interested in investing their capital there. As long as peace is not restored in China, none of these aspirations of American imperialism can be realized. It is for this reason that American imperialism is pursuing a policy of peaceful penetration. It is to the interest of American imperialism that a bourgeois-democratic government becomes consolidated in China. In fact, it would merely serve to strengthen its position in the country. This is why this American policy of 'enlightened and reasonable imperialism' is supported by a significant section of the bourgeoisie in other imperialist countries. Even Great Britain, which is attempting to terrorize the national revolutionary movement by a show of armed force, follows this policy. Brandishing a mailed fist, British imperialism takes every opportunity to proclaim its desire to conclude an agreement with 'the real and legal' national government. In other words, British imperialism is saying: 'Let the healthy national movement create favourable conditions for capitalist development in China, and I will lay down my arms'. The hostile schemes of the liberal American government and the manoeuvres of British imperialism are obvious. Their aim is to split the national ranks, to achieve a rapprochement with the bourgeois elements in the national movement, and to prevail upon them to betray and destroy the revolution.

Any bourgeois-democratic government in China will receive the approval and the recognition of the imperialist powers, but only on the condition that it agrees to recognize the domination of foreign capital. Times change—and, inevitably, the forms of imperialist domination in China must also change. Unequal agreements, extraterritoriality, concessions, were all necessary under certain conditions, under certain forms of exploitation. At the present time, however, when conditions are different, capitalist domination in China can be maintained without these coercive privileges. Even the British government has repeatedly stated that these methods are outmoded and can give way to newer, more subtle forms of domination.

The Chinese bourgeoisie is young and weak. It is economically backward and politically immature. If the national liberation movement were to lead the country to capitalist development, it would find itself inevitably under the heel of imperialism. For if national independence is to be realized by a government of the native bourgeoisie pursuing a policy of home capitalism, then this will be an independence in word only. Imperialism will remain the ruling force. Unequal agreements may be abrogated, extra-territoriality abolished, even concessions may be liquidated, yet the so-called national government will still be but a toy in the hands of international capital.

However, such a misfortune will not befall the revolutionary-liberation movement. It will not follow this course. The international conditions in which this movement is taking place secure it against such a course.

Most of the imperialist powers bending every effort to preserve their positions in China are in a state of an insoluble economic crisis. In all these countries, the accumulation of surplus capital available for export—the instrument of colonial exploitation—is declining at an increasingly rapid rate. Only the United States of America can afford to continue the policy of liberal imperialism and thus undermine the Chinese revolution. The United States has export capital. But the imperialist powers which have hitherto occupied positions of dominance in China will not permit themselves to be squeezed out by America. The competition between the various groupings of imperialist powers is all to the favour of the Chinese revolution. The grouping headed by England is prepared to adopt as a last resort a policy of violence and aggression in order to suppress the national-revolutionary movement by force and to preserve the old regime of reactionaries and militarists. However, such a policy would only serve to accelerate the development of the revolution, just as it did last year.

Consequently, the Chinese national-liberation movement will either continue to develop and emerge victorious as a workers' and peasants' revolution, or it will not win at all. Capitalism has become a reactionary force throughout the world. The bourgeoisie cannot lead the revolutionary struggle. The revolutionary democratic movement of China represents a great social revolution.

The Base and the Social Forces of the Revolution*

The arguments for continuing the Northern Expedition, in regard to which a decision has already been adopted by the national government, are as follows: Wuhan has the necessary military forces at its disposal to carry out the expedition. With the help of the forces of Feng Yu-Hsiang and of Yen Hsi-Shan, Chang Tso-Lin will be forced back into Manchuria. Peking and Tientsin will be occupied by the national government. It is reported that Yen Hsi-Shan has issued a declaration in which it is stated that he supports the Kuomintang and will submit to its leadership. This is viewed as a new factor in favour of the Northern Expedition. It is reported that this plan has been approved by military experts. It has also been pointed out that the Northern Expedition cannot be stopped, because if the national army does not advance to the north, then Chang Tso-Lin can advance to the south. Further, the idea is suggested that Feng Yu-Hsiang is on the move. He can no longer remain in Shensi since this province is very poor. But if Feng Yu-Hsiang is advancing, he must be helped and in order to do so, it is necessary to move the national armies to the north.

The new objections raised against my proposal can be summed up as follows: We cannot consolidate our base in the South, because a revolutionary democracy can be established solely by means of ruthless terror and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therefore, it is impossible to remain in Hankow. The fundamental meaning of my proposal is that it is necessary for us to establish a firm base before advancing any further. Borodin says that this is a delusion, that this cannot be accomplished in China, that only a dictatorship of the proletariat can lead to this goal, but a dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible to establish.

In my opinion the tasks of the revolution in the present crisis are as follows:

1. Expansion of the working-class and peasant movement.
2. Democratization, centralization, and consolidation of the state machinery.
3. Reform and the centralization of the army.

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* Roy's speech to the CCP leadership on 13–15 April 1927; included in *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia*. SNR

Arguments Against an Immediate Campaign Against the North

For the sake of avoiding any misunderstanding, I emphasize the word 'immediate'. I am not against a Northern Expedition in general, but I am against an immediate campaign. I take exception to the decision of the Kuomintang that in ten days the troops must move along the Peking-Hankow railroad to occupy Peking and Tientsin. Comrade T'an P'ing-Shan is in favour of the Northern Expedition provided that some necessary preparations are made.

I, too, am in favour of the Northern Expedition. But it must be preceded by a certain amount of preparation.

The arguments of those Kuomintangists who stand for an immediate campaign against the North follow first of all from considerations of a military nature. They say that a rapid advance to the North would give us an opportunity to shatter the Fengtien forces and not only to occupy Peking and Tientsin, but at the same time to drive the Mukden forces back beyond the Great Wall. This is a very tempting proposal. According to Comrade Borodin, all the military experts support it unanimously. I will not harbour an appraisal of military strength, but will merely mention certain facts to demonstrate that one cannot always rely on the opinion of military experts.

Two weeks ago they were saying that in two or three months they would be able to occupy Shanghai without any difficulty. Yesterday, however, Comrade Borodin admitted that he has always been opposed to an eastward advance because it would have wiped out our troops. Thus, he himself testified that two weeks ago the military experts were wrong. But one cannot rely so readily on the opinion of experts who were absolutely wrong two weeks ago.

The policy is now being defined by the opinion of military experts in spite of the fact that two weeks ago, in proposing that (we) advance and occupy Nanking, these specialists lost sight of a completely elementary factor, namely, that the distance between Hankow and Nanking is four times as great as that between Shanghai and Nanking. Railroad transportation exists between Nanking and Shanghai, and Chiang Kai-Shek could have turned up in Nanking four times sooner than the Wuhan forces. They forgot about this. These military experts are not familiar with the ABCs of strategy, yet this does not prevent them from determining our policy. It should be said that Comrade Galen was opposed to the plan of occupying Nanking. All the Chinese specialists, especially Ch'en Ch'eng, were for it. The plan for the Peking expedition was also drawn up by generals. *An immediate campaign against the North is fraught with grave danger.*

If we really want to smash the Northern forces, we must set about this seriously. We will have to concentrate all our forces on the

Peking-Hankow railroad. This would mean that Wuhan will be left without defences. If we move towards the north, we will provide either Chiang Kai-Shek or the Northern forces with an opportunity to attack us from the direction of Nanking. This danger becomes even more heightened as a result of yesterday's events, that is, the second occupation of Pukow by the Northerners and their threat to Nanking. This victory by the Northern forces indicates, first, that the Northerners did not suffer as serious a defeat as we had assumed and, second, that there probably exists an agreement between Chiang Kai-Shek and the Northern forces.

Thus, on the right flank we are threatened by quite a substantial combination of armed forces. Our rear is not defended, we have no base, and yet we want to advance into a new region. Under such conditions, the Northern Expedition represents nothing but a military adventure.

The plan for the Northern Expedition is built on the assumption that Feng Yu-Hsiang and Yen Hsi-Shan will join us. But even if they were to join us, the danger will not be removed. When we reach Peking, the alignment of forces will be unequal. Our forces will be in the minority, whereas in the person of Yen Hsi-Shan we will have another T'ang Sheng-Chih or even a Chiang Kai-Shek. It is equally unknown what stand Feng Yu-Hsiang will take. The same (situation) we were in in Nanchang awaits us in Peking. The bourgeois and feudal elements in the national army will clash with the revolutionary elements, and another split will occur. The reactionary forces, headed by Yen (Hsi-Shan), and, possibly, by Feng (Yu-Hsiang) will occupy Peking, and we will be forced either to surrender or retreat. We will have to abandon Peking; by that time, Wuhan will probably be already under the control of the reaction and, in the end, we will have nowhere to go.

An immediate campaign against the North means that we are leaving a territory where we have at our disposal the powerful organizations of the Kuomintang, the Communist Party and the workers' and peasants' organizations, for an unknown land where we have no organized forces apart from the armies of Feng (Yu-Hsiang) and Yen (Hsi-Shan). There are no guarantees that these forces will always remain friendly towards us. On the contrary, there are sufficient grounds to suppose that after a certain amount of time has elapsed, a crisis will arise and these forces will take action against us, but we will have no sound base for a struggle against them.

The fundamental objection to an immediate campaign against the North (this argument was advanced yesterday by T'an P'ing-Shan) is that this campaign would reinforce the position of the militarist elements and have harmful consequences for the basic forces of the revolution, that is, the workers and peasants. The balance of the forces of the revolution will be destroyed. Its base will not be the might of the organized masses, but the unreliable military forces in the hands of reactionary-feudal generals. Comrade Borodin admits that a direct result of the Northern Expedition will be the creation of a military combination out of heterogeneous elements; this, of course, is exactly what will happen, and the reactionary elements will have the dominant role.

The present crisis has caused the fundamental problems of the revolution to take precedence. An immediate campaign against the North means an evasion of these problems. This is a typically petty bourgeois policy. But the proletariat cannot save itself by flight just because the problems of the revolution are difficult to solve. If we do not solve problems posed by the development of the movement, the future of the revolution will be in the greatest jeopardy.

As the revolution developed, the process of class differentiation unfolded. At a certain stage, the bourgeoisie turned against the revolution. The social base of the revolution came to consist of the proletariat, the peasantry, and the urban petty bourgeoisie. At the present stage, the revolutionary bloc of these classes must establish a democratic dictatorship.

Recent events have substantiated the correctness of this view. The hour has struck when the future of the Chinese revolution must be assured by the establishment of a democratic dictatorship of these classes. But instead of doing this, it is proposed that the Northern Expedition be continued; this means an escape from the fundamental problems of the revolution.

We are retreating, but where to? We are jumping from the frying pan into the fire. Right now we have to cope only with Chiang Kai-Shek. But we are running from him to unknown territories where, in all probability, we will have to encounter many more like him.

An immediate drive against the North not only fails to resolve the problem of class destratification, but it denotes collaboration with the reactionary elements that are betraying the revolution at every step. If history teaches us anything at all, we may be certain that another Nanchang awaits us in Peking. Instead of aiming for many Nanchangs, we ought to create safeguards against future repetitions of Nanchang. Why did we have the Nanchang crisis? Because the democratic revolutionary forces were not sufficiently consolidated in the preceding Northern Expedition. When the clash with the bourgeoisie occurred, we could not suppress it. Before proceeding any further, it is necessary to have a guarantee that we will not find ourselves again so unprepared. We must mobilize the democratic revolutionary forces. Before proceeding any further, it is necessary to strengthen the base.

An immediate campaign against the North means that the petty bourgeoisie, under the pressure of certain military leaders, will turn to flight and abandon the masses. It is tantamount to a betrayal of the peasantry; of the proletariat in Shanghai, Canton, and Wuhan; (and) of these masses who had suffered, gained victories and sacrificed themselves, and who will lead the revolution to a victorious conclusion. Can the Communist Party, the political party of these masses, follow the petty bourgeoisie in this shameful desertion? It is not as serious a matter for the petty bourgeoisie. With the Don Quixotism peculiar to it, it will oscillate from one venture into another, and if a catastrophe occurs, it will go over to the side of the bourgeoisie. It has nothing to lose. The working class cannot behave like this.

I will now turn to the second point I wanted to make, namely, my criticism of Borodin's plan and the perspectives of the Chinese revolution as outlined by Borodin.

I could elaborate on this in detail, and a detailed criticism, in my opinion, would be of great benefit to our young Chinese Party. But I will bypass this now and merely touch on those points in Comrade Borodin's speech which dealt with our immediate tasks.

The only deduction which can be drawn from Borodin's speech adds up to the fact that he and those whose views he expresses consider that the Chinese revolution has broken down—that the leadership of the national movement has definitely been seized by the bourgeoisie. The revolutionary forces must therefore retreat somewhere to the hills, or to the Mongolian desert. If this is so, that is to say, if the comrades who have been responsible for leadership acknowledge that the revolution has been defeated under their leadership, it means that their policy was wrong and they have forfeited the right to lead the revolution.

Comrade Borodin and those whose opinions he expresses propose that the revolution withdraw from the provinces where there exists an organized proletariat with political experience, that it withdraw from the territories where the revolution has been partly achieved and go (to regions) where the reaction is stronger.

They propose that we leave the provinces where the revolution has a social base, where there are an organized proletariat, a revolutionary peasant movement, and powerful party organizations, and go into the backward provinces where the social base is very weak, where the counter-revolution is stronger and better organized.

I will note one contradiction in the theory and the plan of Comrade Borodin. There are, in fact, many such contradictions, but I shall touch upon only one of them. He says that if the Northern Expedition proves successful and the Mukdenites are smashed, then a widespread peasant movement will develop in Honan under the auspices of Feng Yu-Hsiang. Then, why doesn't he stay home and do this under the auspices of T'ang Sheng-Chih? In declaring himself against the tactic of developing a powerful peasant movement in Hunan, he said: 'If we attempt to carry out an agrarian revolution in Hunan, we will be forced immediately into a conflict with very imposing forces'. But if such is the case in Hunan, then what grounds are there to believe that it would be any different in Honan or in Shangtung? If T'ang Sheng-Chih—and, in the opinion of Borodin, he is a '100 per cent revolutionary'—is against an agrarian revolution, then how can one expect that Feng—another one like him—will be for it? This is a contradiction and an illusion.

The petty-bourgeois Left, on to whose wagon Comrade Borodin wants to harness the Communist Party, has neither the daring, nor simply, the desire to start an agrarian revolution. This is a fact which must be recognized. The Northern Expedition will merely provide these elements (the petty bourgeoisie) with a pretext to postpone the solution of the agrarian question.

The Chinese revolution will either win as an agrarian revolution or it will not win at all. The bourgeoisie is against the revolution; the petty bourgeoisie does not have the daring for it; it must be accomplished by the proletariat. If the proletariat does not accomplish it, the national revolution will not succeed. The petty bourgeoisie is betraying the national revolution. If the Communist Party supports the plan for an immediate campaign against the North, it will aid the petty bourgeoisie in betraying the revolution. The Communist Party is faced with the following question: should the proletariat drag behind (*plestis' v khvoste*) the essentially counter-revolutionary policy of the petty bourgeoisie or should it take over the hegemony in the national revolution?

I will now turn to Comrade Borodin's objection to the consolidation of the revolutionary-democratic forces in the Southeast. This objection is dictated by an underestimation of the proletariat and a disdainful attitude towards the strength of the masses. Comrade Borodin thinks that the principal factor in the revolution is not the masses, but our ability to manoeuvre with the petty bourgeoisie, and not only with the petty bourgeoisie but also with various military elements. Yesterday he told us that a result of a military advance would be 'a bouquet of military forces. China will become a land without a master, and we will have the opportunity to manoeuvre between these forces'. To Comrade Borodin the Canton proletariat is 'dust', whereas the Shanghai proletariat is 'a cotton-fibred (*khlopchato-bumazhnyi*) proletariat'.

The revolution must not be 'tied down to them'. Borodin does not mention the Wuhan proletariat whose revolutionary action brought the Left Wing elements to power. He does not want the Wuhan peasantry to go too far, because this might not please T'ang Sheng-Chih. If one is so disdainful of the social forces, the revolution will lose its ground and cease to exist.

Comrade Borodin's theory holds that the consolidation of democratic power in the southeastern provinces can be achieved only on the basis of a dictatorship of the proletariat and ruthless terror. Unfortunately, he furnished no evidence for this theory, he offered no arguments to back it up. According to this theory, there is no intermediate stage between the feudal-bourgeois reaction and the dictatorship of the proletariat. This contradicts the perspective given in the theses of the Communist International. I do not wish to say that the Chinese revolution, or any revolution in general, can be made to fit these that are written on paper, albeit these theses are good and even wise. I consider that if what Borodin says is correct, then the Comintern has an erroneous conception of the Chinese revolution and, consequently, an erroneous conception of the world revolution.

The fundamental task of the Chinese revolution at the present moment is the consolidation of the social and territorial base of the revolution. The bourgeoisie has turned against the revolution. The Left Wing bourgeoisie is disoriented and has no definite perspective. What is most essential now is the organization, concentration, and consolidation of the revolutionary democratic forces. Without this, there is no guarantee for the success of the revolution. And yet, this can be done. The democratic forces can be united under the leadership of the proletariat. It is a very auspicious moment for this. The petty-bourgeois Left Wing power cannot exist another day without the support of the working class. That is why the present moment is extremely auspicious for the proletariat actually to realize its hegemony in the struggle. The hegemony of the proletariat can become a reality. Under the hegemony of the proletariat, the revolution can develop further. What constitutes the hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle? What is the difference between leadership of the revolution and achievement of hegemony in the struggle? The time has not yet come when the proletariat can assume the supreme leadership of the revolution; but because of its dominant position, it can determine the future development of the revolution. Instead of this, the comrades are proposing that the working class and the Communist Party simply capitulate before the panic-stricken petty bourgeoisie. An immediate campaign against the North is incompatible with the interests of workers, peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie—it is hostile to their interests, even if the petty bourgeoisie itself does not realize it. That is why the Communist Party, as the vanguard of the most revolutionary class, must stand up against the Northern Expedition. If the Communist Party stands up against it, the Left Wing elements will not dare to insist on this policy because the Left Wing power cannot exist without the working class. We must establish a democratic dictatorship, but in order to do so, we must first expand the forces of democracy. The revolution is confronted with three tasks. These can be accomplished by consolidating our power in the central and south-eastern provinces, but not by an immediate campaign against the North.

These Tasks are:

1. Mobilization of the democratic forces through an agrarian revolution, and realization of the minimum demands of the proletariat;
2. Seizure of political power in the village by the peasantry;
3. Reorganization and centralization of the revolutionary army, in other words, the creation of a revolutionary army.

The opportunity for this exists. Two of the most important ministries are in the hands of Communists and can be used for realizing these tasks. If we use our power in these two ministries properly and with sufficient energy, in a few months our position will not only become secure, but we will become almost invincible. Then we will be ready to go ahead—to develop the revolution territorially.

Here, in rough outline, is a plan for consolidating our forces:

1. The necessity of defending Wuhan. Concentration of forces on the northern border of Hupeh. The troops of Feng Yu-Hsiang and Yen Hsi-Shan can gradually advance to the Peking-Hankow railroad to threaten the flank of the Northern troops in the event that the latter attempt to drive on Wuhan.
2. An agrarian revolution in Hupeh and Hunan which are completely under the authority of the Wuhan government. The results of an agrarian revolution in Hunan and Hupeh will affect the northern provinces and the way to them will be open.
3. Political penetration into Kiangsi and Kwangtung, reinforced by necessary military actions. The results of the agrarian revolution in Hunan and Hupeh will have an immediate effect on the neighbouring provinces.
4. Subjection of Kiangsi, Fukien, Kwangtung, and Kwangsi to the Wuhan government. Extension of Wuhan's influence to the south-western provinces.
5. Highly energetic work on organizing, propaganda and agitation in Shanghai and in the entire Chekiang province.

6. Maximum use of the power of the Ministries of Labour, Agriculture, and Internal Affairs. The arming of peasants and workers.

7. Improvement of relations with Feng Yu-Hsiang and Yen Hsi-Shan.

As soon as these conditions are fulfilled, the campaign against the North must be launched in order to seize Peking and lay siege to Shanghai by creating an economic blockade and cutting it off from the hinterland.

I am not against the Northern Expedition, but I consider that it must pass through definite stages. During the first stage of the revolution, Kwangtung served as the base. Now we find ourselves at the second stage. Before passing on to the third, it is necessary to develop, strengthen, and concentrate the revolutionary forces on a much larger scale.

The Northern war lords represent a constant threat to the revolution. The destruction of Chang Tso-Lin is essential for the consummation of the revolution. But there is yet another enemy, one that is much closer and no less dangerous. An immediate campaign against the North under the pretext of fighting Chang Tso-Lin would disarm the revolution in the face of this danger. One should not lose sight of the possibility of the creation of a counter-revolutionary feudal-bourgeois bloc aided and abetted by imperialism. The nucleus of this bloc is the Nanking government and in its person the revolution will have a much stronger and more dangerous enemy than Chang Tso-Lin. It is perfectly obvious that the present policy of imperialism consists of promoting the establishment of a feudal-bourgeois bloc which would create a so-called 'anti-Red front' under the guise of nationalism. This is precisely what constitutes the greatest and the most immediate danger to the revolution.

The threat of danger is from this direction, and not from any military grouping in the south, north or west. The danger is political and not geographical in nature, and it may arise anywhere in the country. Attempts are being made to create an alliance of all reactionary forces, including the bourgeoisie, and this danger is a threat to our base. By our base I mean not only Wuhan, but all the territories, under the control of the Kuomintang, all the territories in which the revolution has been partially achieved. And this danger exists in the entire territory. An attack on our base is not a thing of the future. It is already underway. It has already commenced in Chekiang, Fukien, and Kiangsi. These provinces are already outside the control of the national government. Li Chi-Shen is transforming Canton into a centre of the counter-revolution. We have just received reports that Chiang Kai-Shek has sent his agents to Szechuan. The attack has begun. The reaction is surrounding us. And when our house is being attacked, when the forces of reaction are threatening our base, instead of defending our base we are going to the North to find a new base for the revolution.

What are we looking for in the North? Again the military support of Feng Yu-Hsiang and Yen Hsi-Shan? The reliability of these allies is not particularly great. This is common knowledge. We must make a choice. On the one hand, we have the worker-peasant masses as a social base, and on the other hand a few thousand bayonets which may at any moment be turned against us, against the revolution.

It has been repeatedly pointed out that the military factor plays a highly important role in the Chinese revolution. I do not underestimate the military factor, but I am afraid that the Chinese revolution is in danger of becoming militarized. Not only in the Kuomintang, but in the Communist Party as well, priority is given to the policy of manoeuvring between military forces and not to mobilizing the masses which represent the genuine revolutionary-democratic force. The Communist Party must be oriented towards the working class, and only when it finds itself on this sound base will it be able to make use of and manoeuvre between the military forces. But instead of this, the prevailing tendency is to attribute the highest importance to manoeuvring with generals.

Comrade Ch'en Tu-Hsiu said that the revolution cannot die in Wuhan. But no one is demanding that the revolution commit suicide. When I say that the base must be defended, I have in mind not only Wuhan or Hupeh, but all the southeastern provinces. This precisely is what I consider to be the base. And if in the course of the next six months or a year we consolidate our positions creating a real Left power, developing the democratic forces, building a state machinery and a real revolutionary army—then not only will the revolution not die, but it will have a most intensive life and will be in a much better position than would have been as a result of an immediate Northern Expedition.

Even if we assume that the campaign against the North will be successful, that it will be possible to drive Chang Tso-Lin's forces back into Manchuria and to occupy Peking, Tientsin, and so on, even then, the situation will not be definitely favourable to us. A number of difficulties will arise before us. The complications we experienced as a result of the first stage of the Northern Expedition will repeat themselves. The generals with the help of whom we must reach Peking will in all probability turn into new Chiang Kai-Sheks. For Chiang Kai-Shek is not an individual person. He is a representative of definite reactionary, social forces which supported the revolution up to a certain point and then turned against it. The revolution must organize its basic forces in order to safeguard itself against these unreliable allies. During the first Northern Expedition, the democratic social forces were neither sufficiently powerful nor sufficiently well organized to make their influence prevail. The bourgeois elements in the national movement were attempting to seize supreme power. It is true that they did not completely succeed in their aim, but still they did split the Kuomintang. If the revolutionary-democratic forces were sufficiently well organized, Chiang Kai-Shek's *coup* could have been crushed. But before that first Northern Expedition, it was impossible to create a better and stronger organization of revolutionary forces. This work only started from Kwangtung and the forces developed rapidly in the very process of the Northern Expedition. Now the revolution has a much broader base on which the democratic forces can be organized to create a guarantee against reactionary groupings against the revolution.

If we go to Peking immediately, the democratic forces will prove to be even less organized and weaker than during the Nanchang crisis. In Peking, Feng and Yen will wrest the power from our hands and we will be left with no support. If we find ourselves in such a crisis in the north, there is absolutely no guarantee that the base of the revolution would still remain in our hands. To think that we will be able simultaneously to move *to the north and to consolidate our base in the south* is sheer illusion. To consolidate the base means to fight against the forces of reaction, against the counter-revolution which is being organized in the rear of the revolution. In order to carry this out, it is necessary to concentrate on resolving the basic problems of our forces. We need military strength for the defence and consolidation of the base. An immediate campaign against the North will result in our being cut off from our base and our encountering new enemies.

Today, however, Comrade Borodin drew an entirely different picture for us which changes the situation considerably. Today he no longer wants to move on Peking, Kalgan, the Chinese Wall. Today he says that the plan consists merely of occupying the Lunghai railway. I am prepared to agree to such a plan. An advance no further than Lunghai is a purely defensive measure. It enters into the plan for defending our base. This is already not so much of a Don Quixotic adventure as the plan for expanding the revolution to Tibet and for transferring its base to Mongolia. If the Northern Expedition consists of this, then I agree to it. This is simply a defensive measure, and not an offensive. I am not compromising at this point, for in my speech yesterday I proposed that troops should be sent for the time being to the border of Hunan, and that an agreement should also be reached with Feng to enable his gradual advance toward the Lunghai railway. When I objected yesterday to Comrade Borodin's plan, I said that it was necessary for us to advance to the Lunghai railway in the interest of defence. I am opposed to an immediate campaign against the North, but I do not deny the necessity of defending ourselves against the North.

I will now turn to the basic question. Whether to advance to Peking or to Lunghai is only the practical aspect of the basic problem of the revolution. This morning Comrade Ch'en Tu-Hsiu said that the immediate task of the revolution consists not of intensifying it but of expanding it. This constitutes the real difference in our views: whether to intensify or to expand the revolution. The theory is advanced that in those provinces where the revolution has occurred in part, it is impossible to consolidate the power of the Left: we will not be able to exist if the revolution is not expanded.

The bourgeoisie has turned against us. The petty bourgeoisie is vacillating; it is looking for ways to evade the basic questions posed by the development of the revolution. *We must develop the forces of workers and peasants—this is the only measure that will assure the future of the revolution.* To attack the North immediately means to run from this necessity. The petty-bourgeois government is being confronted with the necessity of pursuing a really revolutionary policy, of achieving an agrarian revolution. It is evading this task under the pretext of the necessity of launching an immediate campaign against the North. By declaring themselves in favour of an immediate Northern Expedition, Comrades Borodin, Ch'en Tu-Hsiu, and others register their approval of the actions of the petty bourgeoisie who are evading the necessity of pursuing a revolutionary policy. This is not the way a revolution is developed. Not only is this opportunism, but it can also be interpreted as a betrayal of the working class and the peasantry. Thanks to this theory, we have already suffered defeat in Shanghai. Thanks to this theory, we have refused to intensify the revolution. It is true that a campaign against the North would give rise to a peasant movement there, that the first stage of a mass movement would begin there. But, after all, the peasant movement in Kwangtung, Hunan, and Hupeh has already passed through the first stage—the stage of expansion, and is now ready to enter the second stage, the stage of intensification. It cannot be held back mechanically on the first stage. It must either develop in the process of intensification, or it will begin to rot and deteriorate. The objective situation favours the peasantry assuming the offensive against the reaction in order to annihilate it. If the peasants do not assume the offensive, they themselves will be subjected to attack, as was the case in Kwangtung and Kiangsi, and as will be the case in Hunan if T'ang Sheng-Chih becomes the master of the situation there; the same will happen if the national-revolutionary troops are sent to the North.

If we carry the banner of peasant revolt to Chihli or Shantung, we will lose the positions won in the southern provinces. In addition, the objective situation in the northern provinces—in Chihli and Shantung—is less favourable to the rapid development of the peasant movement than it is in the South. There are more well-to-do peasants in the north, whereas in the South it is the poor peasants that make up the majority. The well-to-do peasants will not join the revolution as quickly and unreservedly as will the poor (peasants). In southern provinces the social base is better for the revolution than in the northern provinces.

Today Comrade Borodin elucidated his theory (which holds) that only by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat and ruthless terror can a genuine Left (Wing) democratic power be established in the southern provinces.

The peasant movement in Hunan, Hupeh, and Kwangtung is ready to enter the second stage. The development of the movement posed the question of a radical solution to the agrarian question. Comrade Borodin points out that in order to consolidate the base of the revolution in the South it is necessary to support the peasantry in its demand for radical agrarian reform; from this it follows that the Communists must turn against the national government, and this will inevitably lead to an armed uprising which will prove very dangerous. Follow his argument in reverse order: an armed uprising is dangerous; but opposition to the government leads to an armed uprising, and the Communists must stand in opposition to the government. Shouldn't one, therefore, refuse to support the peasant movement? What conclusion can we draw? The conclusion is that the Communists must not support the peasantry in its demand for a revolutionary solution to the land question. This is the advice that Comrades Borodin and Ch'en Tu-Hsiu give us.

Such advice is very dangerous in the present situation and the Communist Party must reject it if it wants to play a historic role, if it wants to lead the Chinese revolution.

The struggle against imperialism and militarism will not expand as a result of our evading the necessity of intensifying the revolution. On the contrary, this struggle can be developed only if we are prepared to meet this necessity, if we assume the offensive on the basis of reaction in our own house before giving battle to the external foe. It would be stupid to overextend ourselves when our base is insecure and open to enemy attack (this attack has already begun). The only guarantee of the future of the revolution is to provide it with a revolutionary democratic base, and in China the core of the revolutionary democracy is the peasantry.

Not to want an agrarian revolution, to consider it premature in China denotes a lack of understanding of the Chinese revolution . . . an absence of a correct perspective. Those who favour an immediate campaign against the North do not want to carry out the programme of agrarian revolution. Therefore, I pointed out this morning that Comrade Ch'en Tu-Hsiu's viewpoint contradicts the theses of the Communist International, and I reiterate this.

Mobilization of the revolutionary-democratic forces—the proletariat, the peasantry, and the urban petty bourgeoisie—and the establishment of a democratic dictatorship are the only guarantee of the victory of the Chinese revolution. The time has come when the Communist Party is able to undertake these steps. The Left (Wing) power in Wuhan will not last a single day without the support of the Communist Party, that is, without the inspired and conscious support of the labouring masses. The time has come when the Communist Party must participate in revolutionary power and not lag behind (*plestis' v khvoste*) the Kuomintang. The Communist Party must understand this. *An immediate advance to the North will prove detrimental to the development of the revolution.* If the Communist Party announces its opposition to an immediate campaign against the North, and if it clearly explains its point of view, the petty-bourgeois Left will not dare to attempt this adventure. The Communist Party will not let it deviate from the fulfilment of the most urgent tasks of the revolution.

In this way, the proletariat will achieve hegemony in the national struggle. Although the leadership of the revolution is still in the hands of a coalition of classes, the proletariat, as the most revolutionary and best organized class, will determine the policy of the revolution.

I shall summarize my objections to an immediate campaign against the North. They add up to the following:

1. In the military respect, the expedition might end in victory as well as in defeat, and there is no guarantee that it will emerge victorious.
2. Even if it is successful in the military respect, a series of problems will arise as a result of a military victory; there is every ground to believe that it would strengthen the military forces and weaken the democratic masses.
3. An advance to the North, which requires the concentration of all the military forces available to the national government, would expose the southern base of the revolution to attacks by the reaction. The reactionary forces will consolidate and overthrow the democratic forces which have only partial power there.
4. At a time when the bourgeoisie has definitely turned against the revolution, the only guarantee (that remains) is the development and consolidation of democratic forces—the proletariat, the peasantry,

and the urban petty bourgeoisie. This task cannot be realized simultaneously with a serious campaign against the North. An immediate expedition will serve as a pretext for preventing the development of the democratic forces; hence, it will be damaging to the revolution.

Concretely, I propose the following:

1. To distribute the military forces in the north, east, and west in such manner as to ensure the defence of the second line of the revolution—the Yangtze Valley. The elaboration of this plan should be assigned to military experts. To recapitulate: dispatch of forces to the Hunan front; collaboration with Feng who will gradually advance to the Lunghai railway; the advance of the Second and Sixth armies to the western section of Anhwei.
2. To restore the power of the national government in the provinces of Kiangsi, Kwangtung, and Kwangsi.
3. The return to power in Kwangtung does not require a southern expedition. This can be achieved by local forces; by a revolt of troops which have remained loyal to the national government, and by the action of workers and peasants.
4. When Kwangtung is conquered, it will not be difficult to conquer Kiangsi.

Here I would like to say a few words about financial difficulties. Some may have formed the impression that I am a utopian who draws up glorious plans, but loses sight of the practical problems of the movement.

A radical solution of the agrarian problem would not worsen the financial crisis—on the contrary, it would aid considerably in resolving it. The large, confiscated estates and temple lands can serve as security in the issuance of bank notes. The example of the German *rent* (*rentnyi*) bank will help us in resolving the financial difficulties of the revolutionary government of China. In Germany the rate of exchange of the mark was restored on the basis of guaranteeing the new emission by large estates. There the landowners gave assistance to the state on the condition that it submit to their influence. In China, the revolutionary state can find a way out of its financial difficulties by doing away with feudal reaction. In taking a stand for the agrarian revolution, we are not declaring war on the petty bourgeoisie, we are not intensifying the conflict with it, we are not establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat. On the contrary, we are consolidating the power of the Left, we are creating a base for a genuine revolutionary power.

13–15 April 1927

The Problems of the Chinese Revolution and the Role of the Proletariat*

Comrades, the delegation of the Communist International would find it highly desirable if the discussion on the report of the Central Committee were opened by the Chinese comrades themselves. But since the Presidium insists on the discussion being opened by the representatives of the Comintern—we agree to speak first.

The eleven basic points set forth in the report of the Central Committee concern the most important problems of the Chinese revolution. These problems have been discussed in detail in the Communist International. Hence, although the delegation of the Comintern was not given the opportunity to hear the opinion of the Chinese comrades, it will nevertheless be able to state its view on these questions.

I will not speak on each of these eleven points separately. I will group them around three themes and will comment separately on each of these.

The first theme concerns *the perspectives of the revolution*. Under it I have subsumed questions pertaining to the development of the revolution; the past, present, and future role of the bourgeoisie; the inter-relations of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie; the agrarian revolution; and the hegemony of the proletariat.

For a correct determination of the perspectives of the revolution, the situation should be examined from three different aspects: (1) from the standpoint of the development of the revolution, (2) from the standpoint of the interrelationship of classes within the movement itself, and (3) from the standpoint of the international situation.

On 30 May 1925, the national-revolutionary movement in China and the anti-imperialist struggle entered a new stage. This was the stage of revolutionary mass struggle, the struggle of the proletariat for hegemony. The preceding period was characterized essentially by: (1) the Shanghai events, (2) the events in Peking and in the North, (3) the events in the South—particularly the Hong Kong strike.

The proletariat had hegemony in the struggle in Shanghai, but only for a short time. As soon as the revolution began to spread, the bourgeoisie left the movement, the petty bourgeoisie followed the bourgeoisie, and thus it turned out that the proletariat became isolated. The proletariat captured the hegemony for a short period of time, but it could not retain it.

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* From *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia*. Text of M. N. Roy's speech on 30 April 1927, at the Fifth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. SNR

In the North, the question of the hegemony of the proletariat was not even raised, because there the movement was not based on the proletariat. It was primarily a movement of the petty bourgeoisie which was supported by the liberal bourgeoisie and which also found response in certain circles of militarists opposed to the more reactionary elements.

In the South—in Canton—the development of forces went further. There the proletariat not only seized the hegemony, but retained it for a considerable period of time. For one whole year the policy of the Canton national government was largely determined by the influence of the Hong Kong strike. It has even been said that the strike committee actually performed the function of a second government. This means that the policy of the national government was largely determined by the strike committee—the political organ of the combatant proletariat. In other words, for almost one year, the proletariat led the anti-imperialist struggle in the South. This emergence of the working class in the role of a leader (*gegemon*) in the national-revolutionary struggle affected the positions of the bourgeoisie and the so-called Left militarist circles. The attempt of the proletariat to seize the leadership resulted in the crystallization of the bourgeois forces; to a certain extent, this crystallization also affected the feudal-militarist elements.

This process of the political crystallization of the bourgeoisie—which came as a response to the proletariat's aspiration for hegemony—passed through several stages of development. The culminating point of this process was 20 March. The process began with differentiation in the milieu of the militarists; there arose a sort of a Left militarism. The revolt of Feng Yu-Hsiang, the change in the orientation of T'ang Sheng-Chih and the revolt of Hsia Tou-Yin were the concrete manifestations of this (process). Such was the first stage.

The appearance of the notorious brochure by Tai Chi-T'ao, the Western Hills Conference, and the Shanghai Conference can be considered as being the basic features of the second stage.

Both of these stages are but different manifestations of one and the same process; at the same time, each is somewhat different from the other.

The split that occurred in the ranks of the militarists during the first stage was objectively revolutionary in character, because it tended to weaken militarism. The second stage contained already the objective germs of the counter-revolution. In this period, the consciously aggressive policy of the bourgeoisie which sought to deter the revolutionary development of the national-liberation movement began to make its influence felt. When the proletariat definitely took the course of fighting for hegemony, it became clear that the development of the movement under the leadership of the proletariat would lead to a non-bourgeois revolution. The bourgeoisie mobilized its forces to counteract this prospect of development put forth by the proletariat; it sought to prevent the revolution from developing a proletarian character and to steer its course into the narrow channel of its own class interests. There exists an organic tie between these two stages of the single process of crystallization. These were stages in the crystallization of forces which sought to prevent the Chinese revolution from taking a non-bourgeois path of development.

The third stage of this process was the Canton *coup* of 20 March. The significance of the *coup* was not local, but marked an event of nation-wide importance. The crystallization of all the forces that were united against the proletariat was expressed in this event. The transformation of the bourgeoisie, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, into an objectively counter-revolutionary force was the result of a lengthy process which started considerably earlier than 20 March. It was not after he entered Shanghai and shot the workers there that Chiang Kai-Shek became a counter-revolutionary. The forces which he represented and which showed themselves to be so aggressively counter-revolutionary in Shanghai, had been undergoing a process of crystallization for a certain period of time.

During this period, our Party made several mistakes which stemmed from an overestimation of the bourgeoisie. This was not a subjective mistake. The Party had no desire to negotiate with the bourgeoisie. The mistake was a result of an insufficiently clear understanding of the process of the crystallization of the counter-revolution. During the period of reaction— starting from 20 March until the beginning of the Northern Expedition—our Party pursued the policy of a united front and ignored its basic task, that of developing the class struggle. A united front is, of course, very necessary. But while the Communist Party was creating it, it should not have overlooked the necessity of developing the energies of the working class as an independent force. It was obvious that the bourgeoisie was mobilizing its forces against the proletariat; yet the Communist Party was participating in the united front without simultaneously preparing the working-class organizations for becoming an independent political force.

This, precisely, is what constituted the basic error. The consequences of this error made themselves felt at the sharpest point of the crisis. When Chiang Kai-Shek occupied Shanghai and declared war on the proletariat, the Party was faced with the necessity of making a cruel choice between overthrowing him or surrendering. Due to our earlier policy, no sufficient premises were established for a middle road, (that is), not entering into battle for the immediate overthrow of Chiang Kai-Shek, and not surrendering to him. This perspective already existed before the Shanghai crisis, beginning from the very events of 20 March. The argument of whether or not to collaborate with the Right Wing should not have been understood as a question of either a final break, or a surrender. It is only on the basis of class struggle that we can enter a united front (and) collaborate with the bourgeoisie. In collaborating with the bourgeoisie, we must at the same time prepare ourselves for the forthcoming, inevitable class struggle.

Overestimation of the necessity of a united front with the bourgeoisie and the Left militarists had led the Party to underestimate the role of the petty bourgeoisie. When it formed a united front with the bourgeoisie and the Left militarist elements, the Party was unable at the same time to win the petty bourgeoisie over to its side by explaining the actual meaning of the crystallization of the bourgeoisie and the feudal-bourgeois elements. As a result, at first the petty bourgeoisie began to waver, then it became frightened and, finally, it joined the side of the bourgeoisie when the latter openly declared war. The proletariat found itself isolated. The principal reason for the failure of the Shanghai uprising is rooted in our inability to appreciate the importance of the petty bourgeoisie, in our inability to subject it to the influence of the proletariat. This was our mistake not only in the Shanghai events, but during the entire period beginning with 20 March. This underestimation of the importance of the petty bourgeoisie was not an isolated mistake committed in Shanghai, but has been the historic mistake of the Party.

Next, the fourth stage in the crystallization of the bourgeois forces, which went over to a counter-attack against the proletariat's attempts to consolidate its hegemony, was the first Northern Expedition. Objectively, the Northern Expedition served as an instrument for expanding the forces of the revolution, for developing the energies of the masses. But subjectively, it represented an attempt by the bourgeoisie to extend the power it had seized on 20 March. I will speak about the Northern Expedition in greater detail in another part of my speech. Here, I will only say that the Northern Expedition resulted in an extremely rapid development of the revolution. The bourgeoisie saw that its plan to use the expedition as a means of expanding its own power was not developing in the right direction. The bourgeoisie turned against the revolution, because the revolution did not follow the course it desired.

Such, in brief, was the process of the development of the revolution in the course of the past three years. Class conflict was the cardinal feature of this process. The development of the revolution has reached a stage where the question arises of whether the next period will be a period of decline* or one of further development. It is perfectly obvious that the next period of the revolution will be a period of development and not one of decline. There is no place in the Communist Party for the theory that the coming period will be a period of decline. Just why this is so, I will now explain.

We must examine the future perspectives from two points of view. The first bears in mind the internal class forces. At present, the large-scale bourgeoisie and the feudal-bourgeois elements have deserted the ranks of the national revolution. Consequently, class contradictions in the nationalist ranks have been reduced to a considerable extent. The social forces which now form the base of the revolution are not as contradictory to one another as were the social forces from which the revolution drew its support in the preceding stage. The proletariat, the peasantry, and the petty bourgeoisie—this is the base of the revolution at the present stage. Foreign imperialism and native (*tuzemnyi*) militarism are exploiting and oppressing all three of these classes. A united front of these three classes will therefore be more homogeneous than the united front of the preceding period. It stands to reason that the elimination of internal contradictions increases the potential power of the revolution. At the present stage, the possibilities of developing the energies of the masses are increasing. In the class coalition which now forms the base of the revolution, the peasantry constitutes the overwhelming majority. Therefore, the basic question at the moment is one of unleashing the revolutionary energies of the peasantry. The very course of the development of the revolution has demonstrated the necessity of radical agrarian reform, the necessity of an agrarian revolution. This question is placed before the revolution not subjectively, but in the order of its objective development. On the other hand, the revolutionary movement is now able to solve this problem. In the preceding stage, the feasibility of a radical agrarian programme involved extreme difficulties with respect to tactics because the landowning classes participated in the national ranks. Now the situation has changed. The classes against which, for tactical considerations, it was impossible to declare war have deserted the revolution and have turned against it. We did not force them out—they left on their own. Therefore, there are no longer tactical or other considerations which could interfere with the development of the class struggle in the village. Indeed, the development of the class struggle is the only guarantee of the future of the revolution. The only possibility that can arise of a decline of the movement, a decline of the revolution, is in the event that the Communist Party and its revolutionary allies are not audacious enough in solving the agrarian problem that was posed to the revolution by the very course of its obective development. Objectively, the revolution is on the upgrade—there are no grounds for a decline. But there also exists a subjective factor. If the Communist Party and the other revolutionary elements subjectively promote the development of objective forces, the revolution can only follow the ascending line of the social base of the revolution. There are no reasons for misgivings that the intensification of the class struggle in the village might lead to a split in the united front. The united front which we were afraid of breaking up is already broken. The feudal-bourgeois elements have already split the united front; they have already joined the side of the counter-revolution. We must act on the basis of accomplished facts. We must accept the challenge of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

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* In his report, Ch'en Tu-Hsiu said that the next period of the revolution would be a period of decline. (M.N.R.)

Our task cannot be formulated in terms of our having either to intensify the revolution, or to expand it. The right approach to the question is that we must destroy the roots of reaction in the village. There is no other way. Such is the objective necessity dictated by the present stage. If we are able to destroy the counter-revolution by intensifying the revolution, then we must intensify it; if we are able to achieve the same by means of expansion, then we must expand the revolution. If both the one and the other have to be done, then we will do it. The petty bourgeoisie has become frightened by this critical period of the revolution. It does not want to carry out agrarian reforms. Never has the petty bourgeoisie led an agrarian revolution. If the Chinese proletariat, if the Chinese Communist Party wants to lead the agrarian revolution with the sanction and approval of the petty bourgeoisie, then the agrarian revolution will never happen unless the peasants take it up themselves. Actually, they have already taken up this cause.

The revolution is entering a period of intensive development, and not decline. Yet the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie are overpowered by a spirit of defeatism. Some of the Kuomintang leaders are already talking about a Chinese 1905. By this they want to say that the Chinese revolution has suffered defeat. It must begin to retreat. This reference to the year 1905 conceals dangerous intentions. Frightened of the revolution, the petty bourgeoisie wants to run to Mongolia, to Tibet, to Turkestan. Let us be frank. In the ranks of the Communist Party, in the ranks of the proletariat, there can be no place for such defeatist and panic-stricken moods. The time has come when the proletariat must have the courage to demonstrate that it is willing and able to lead the revolution if the petty bourgeoisie proves incapable of doing so. On 30 May, the proletariat began the struggle for hegemony. The stage has now been reached when the proletariat must capture this hegemony and carry it out in practice.

Was it necessary to start the struggle for hegemony? If it was necessary, then we cannot evade the consequences that ensued. We find ourselves in a situation where we must take the hegemony into our own hands. If we fail to do so, we will ruin the results of the brilliant and heroic fight of the Chinese proletariat. The Communist Party cannot allow this to happen. Having started on 30 May the struggle for hegemony, the proletariat seized the hegemony either temporarily or at different times in different places. Now the time has come when the proletariat must establish (its) hegemony on a national scale in the entire national revolution. If the proletariat accepts the role that history has bestowed on it, the petty bourgeoisie will have only two possibilities: either to return to the camp of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, or to follow the path of revolution together with the proletariat. Without a revolutionary policy, the national government will not hold out here, it will not preserve its power. If it does not accept such a policy, it will be overthrown by the internal forces of counter-revolution and reaction.

The petty-bourgeois Left cannot return to Chiang Kai-Shek: this would be political suicide. Politically perhaps, the petty bourgeoisie may not be particularly shrewd, but it understands this. If we assume the initiative, if the Communist Party will lead the proletariat to hegemony, the petty bourgeoisie will be on our side. It will follow the path of revolution.

The rise or decline of the revolution at the present time does not depend upon objective conditions. All the objective conditions speak for the revolution being on the upswing. Only the subjective factors inspire doubt. And this subjective factor is first of all the proletariat and the Communist Party. If the actions of the proletariat and its party will correspond to the objective conditions, the only future perspective of the revolution is not one of decline, but that of continued development.

Permit me, in connection with the question of the hegemony of the proletariat, to say a few words about the Shanghai events. In Shanghai, the Communist Party had the opportunity of leading the proletariat in a struggle for hegemony. An analysis of events will permit us to assess whether the Communist Party was able to exert hegemony in the struggle, whether it knew how to lead the proletariat to the struggle for hegemony. I must first of all note that only during the third uprising did the question of the hegemony of the proletariat become acute. The first uprising can be disregarded, because it was an insignificant putschlike adventure devoid of any great political significance. There is no need to dwell upon it. But the second uprising, the February uprising, was already a serious affair. A study of the events makes clear the following: the uprising was premature, the movement was not under the leadership of the Party—it developed spontaneously; as soon as the movement began, the Party understood its prematureness. Nevertheless, the Party did nothing to gain control of the masses; the Party dragged behind instead of acting in the capacity of a conscious leader of the masses. After the masses had come forward prematurely and without political guidance, the Party got the idea of pushing them into even more premature actions. I have in mind the project for creating a town committee which would actually have been a disguised Soviet.

In this struggle for power, the Party did nothing to induce the petty bourgeoisie to follow the proletariat, or to co-ordinate the Shanghai movement with the nation-wide movement. Shanghai was regarded as a small China within a larger China. In this small China, irrespective of the position of all the rest of the movement, an attempt was made to create a workers' state. This was not the leadership of the proletariat in a struggle for hegemony. This was a premature struggle for power which, naturally, ended in defeat.

When I emphasize the shortcomings and make critical comments, I do not for a minute lose sight of the tremendous achievements in this period.

Illusions about Chiang Kai-Shek continued to exist in the period between the second and third uprisings. The Party led the proletariat to a premature attempt at seizing power, but was unable to explain to it that the bourgeoisie had turned against the revolution. Even then, the Party still did not properly understand, nor did it explain to the democratic masses, that Chiang Kai-Shek had already deserted to the side of the counter-revolution. The Party did not explain to the proletariat or to the petty-bourgeois masses that Chiang Kai-Shek wants to seize Shanghai in order to convert it into a base not of the revolution, but of the counter-revolution, in the interests of the feudal-bourgeois elements who are fighting against the revolution. If the illusions about Chiang Kai-Shek persisted even among the working class—the vanguard of the national-revolutionary struggle—then there is nothing surprising in the presence of much greater illusions among the petty-bourgeois masses. The revolutionary democracy of Shanghai was not prepared for the inevitability of the struggle against Chiang Kai-Shek. As a result, the Shanghai proletariat found itself isolated during the third uprising when it started its heroic fight, full of revolutionary self-sacrifices, when it declared war on the counter-revolution. This occurred because the Party failed to help the petty bourgeoisie to understand the counter-revolutionary essence of Chiang Kai-Shek. When the latter occupied Shanghai and pursued an openly counter-revolutionary policy, the petty bourgeoisie began to falter, it became frightened and, in the end, it rejected a united front with the proletariat. In view of this, the local government which, according to the initial plan, was supposed to have become a disguised Soviet of Workers' Deputies, found itself dependent upon the large-scale bourgeoisie. Otherwise, it could not have functioned. If the proletariat is unable to realize its hegemony in a united front with the petty bourgeoisie, then it will be even less able to realize it with the large-scale bourgeoisie. But, anyway, such were the practical results of the third uprising. The way out at that moment should under no circumstances have been one of either the seizure or the surrender of power, of the proletariat either having to lead or to surrender. After all, there is a distance of enormous measure between these two perspectives. It is at this point that the question of the hegemony of the proletariat arises. In order to carry out its hegemony with success, the proletariat must win the sympathy of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. The proletariat did not carry this out in Shanghai, because it did not know how to win the petty bourgeoisie over to its side.

Let us turn to a determination of the perspectives of the revolution from the third standpoint, from the standpoint of the international situation. This question can be discussed in detail in my report on the theses of the Communist International. I will say only a few words now. There is nothing in the international situation predetermining a decline of the Chinese revolution during the forthcoming stage. On the contrary, the situation favours an upswing of the revolution. If this were not the case, if the international situation were not favourable to the development of the revolution, the theses of the Communist International would be at variance with the facts. In that event, the Communist International would be compelled to alter its viewpoint on the Chinese revolution.

The second theme concerns *mutual relations with the military forces*, their relation to the revolution and the disproportion between the military and the social forces of the revolution.

We cannot accept the schematic plan of Dr Sun Yat-Sen according to which the revolution must pass through three stages: (1) military, (2) educational and organizational, and (3) democratic. It is possible that this schematic plan is the fruit of brilliant petty-bourgeois thought, but the proletariat cannot act on the basis of such a scheme.

Militarism is a peculiar feature of the Chinese society. Its connection, to a certain degree, with the Chinese revolutionary movement is inevitable. But it is necessary to establish the extent to which these forces can be used for the revolution. For this, one must examine the social base of militarism. Militarism* in China is not an accidental phenomenon. Why is it that we find this particular type of militarism here and not in other countries? We can establish the possibility of using this force only when we find out the cause of this phenomenon. We will treat this question in detail in the discussion of the agrarian problem. Here I will only touch upon the general aspects of this question.

The base of militarism lies in the rural overpopulation of the country. What are the causes of rural overpopulation? The rule of imperialism interfered with the normal economic development of China. Imperialism interfered with the establishment of a normal ratio of productive forces. Thanks to imperialism, the overwhelming masses of the population remain tied to the land. In its present state of backwardness, agriculture cannot support all the population that is dependent upon land. Thus, these militarist forces are used directly for perpetuating the feudal character of the village economy and the patriarchal features of rural government.

Indirectly, militarism is an instrument of imperialist domination. In short, militarism is the expression of all reactionary forces in the country. This bloc of counter-revolutionary forces contains contradictions and conflicts. The revolutionary classes can exploit these conflicts for the development of the revolution. But it would be a mistake to think that these forces of militarism can become a base of the revolution. Objectively, the revolution will destroy the roots of militarism. One cannot count on these forces to further the process of their own destruction.

The theory which holds that we can win the militarist forces over to our side and transform them into a revolutionary force is very dangerous. That this is impossible has been demonstrated in practice; and it can be demonstrated in theory. The danger of any one theory or another can sometimes be judged by its source of origin. Two months ago, during a discussion with General Li Chi-Shen, I raised the question of a compromise with militarism. He said: 'And why not? Only yesterday some of the units of our revolutionary army were still in the militarists' armies; today they have joined the revolution. It is a question of gradualness. There is no reason to believe that the rest of the militarists, too, will not join us in the future. Is it not possible to win over to our side all the forces of Chang Tso-Lin?'

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* The partition of the country by individual military leaders who wage a continuous civil war among each other disrupts the economic life and destroys the political unity of the country. (M.N.R.)

1. *Feng Yu-Hsiang*. His conduct in Peking. When the attempt was made to seize power in Peking, calculated on the assistance of Feng Yu-Hsiang, at the last moment he refused to come forward. The nationalists thought of taking power by relying solely on the military forces of Feng Yu-Hsiang. No use was made of other social forces which could have influenced the situation. Consequently, when Feng Yu-Hsiang backed out, the movement collapsed.

2. *Hsia Tou-Yin*. We know that his revolt was crushed as a result of betrayal by his own officers who were bought out by Japan. A force of this type cannot serve as a reliable base for the revolution.

3. *Generals: supporters of Chiang Kai-Shek*. These generals participated in the national-revolutionary movement as long as it was led by Chiang Kai-Shek. As soon as Chiang Kai-Shek turned against the movement, they followed him.

4. *The most important fact: the experience with T'ang Sheng-Chih*. We must elucidate this fact, because it is very relevant. What was the position of T'ang Sheng-Chih? Since he joined the revolution, his military forces have increased by 100 per cent. This army is subordinated not to the national government, but to T'ang Sheng-Chih. He will use these military forces, created by him in the process of the revolution, not for developing the revolution, but for consolidating his power in Hunan and Hupeh. During the past three weeks, a number of resolutions have been adopted on the further advance into the north. In the Political Council of the Kuomintang, T'ang Sheng-Chih had always declared himself in favour of the advance. But when the question was raised as to what troops were to be sent, he proposed the Fourth and Eleventh armies. In the end he agreed to send three of his divisions. But when the order had to be given, he imposed the condition that his troops were not to go beyond the boundaries of the Hupeh province. The Fourth and Eleventh armies were to be dispatched to Hunan, while T'ang Sheng-Chih's troops were to remain in Hupeh.* There are a number of other highly interesting facts that I could tell you about, but this by itself is enough.

In short, the militarists—even those of them who incline most to the Left—in no way constitute a reliable base for the revolution. If the revolution does not develop the social forces that are capable of resisting militarism, then militarism will destroy the national revolution.

5. *One more example important for the future*. It is essential to understand it thoroughly, since it serves as grounds for numerous speculations. It concerns Yen Hsi-Shan from the province of Shansi. During

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* This 'Left' military ally of ours will simply use the banner of the national revolution to increase his own forces. (M.N.R.)

the Northern Expedition, while the expedition army had not yet reached Nanking and Shanghai, Yen Hsi-Shan maintained close association with Chiang Kai-Shek and agreed to start an offensive against Peking provided that the national-revolutionary forces would also advance to the north along the Tientsin-Pukow railroad. But now, thanks to the split in the national front, a serious offensive against Peking has become virtually impossible. Yen Hsi-Shan's position has changed accordingly. If large enough forces are sent from Hunan to the Hankow-Peking railroad, if the Fengtien forces are repelled, if the Lunghai railroad is captured, only then will Yen Hsi-Shan perhaps come forward and occupy Peking. But Yen Hsi-Shan would occupy Peking for himself and not for the national government. However, should the Fengtien forces rout the national-revolutionary army and should Feng Yu-Hsiang come to its aid, it is equally possible that Yen Hsi-Shan will attack Feng Yu-Hsiang from the flank. He has very large forces on the left flank of Feng Yu-Hsiang.

These are a few facts which demonstrate the unreliability of the so-called Left militarists. This has already been repeatedly demonstrated in the past. It follows objectively from the alignment of class forces in the country.

The national revolution cannot migrate from the east to the north and from the north to the west depending on (the whims of) these unprincipled, unreliable, and disloyal Left militarists. The national revolution must have a social base; it must have social roots; it must find a territory where this social base is most developed.

Our attitude toward militarism should be determined by (1) considerations of substance, and (2) tactical tasks. For tactical considerations we must make use of the contradictions between militarists in our own interest. But our policy must not be based on pulling them over to our side. It would be an illusion to think that the militarists could some day become revolutionaries. The task of the revolution is to demoralize and destroy them. This is the aim of our work. According to the theses of the Comintern—this is the aim of the work of Communists in the militarists' armies. One must destroy them and not preach to them the gospel of the national revolution. Differentiation in the forces of the militarists is possible and is, in fact, occurring. The interests of officers and soldiers in the militarists' armies are not the same. Who are they, these soldiers? These are landless peasants who are forced to go into the militarists' armies because they have no other means of livelihood. To this extent, they are revolutionary material. But there are a number of practical difficulties which militate against winning them over to the side of the revolution. Besides, whenever any unit of the militarists' forces joins our side, the national army is admitting both revolutionary and reactionary elements into its ranks; and this applies to soldiers as well as officers. The reactionary corps of officers remains in the army. It retains its influence over the soldiers. The military units retain their former composition. There is only one way of really winning the soldiers of militarists' armies over to the side of the revolution, of really organizing them into a revolutionary army: it is by way of an agrarian revolution. If the national government and the national revolutionary movement will fight—not only through propaganda, but in practice as well—for the extirpation of the very causes of their poverty, the soldiers will join their side and fight for them—but only then, and not before.

This means that the schematic plan of Dr Sun Yat-Sen, with all due respect to his memory, must be rejected. Communists cannot accept a theory according to which the revolution, in its first stage, must rely entirely on military forces; (a theory which says) they'll gather a motley army, reeducate it in the revolutionary spirit, and only then will they take measures for democratizing the revolution. The national revolution must organize its own army, created in the process of the revolution, and not an army which comes and goes from the revolution. If the national government gives land to the peasants, if it emancipates the peasants from feudal oppression and arms them, it will be able to create in a short time an army which will fight consciously for the revolution, which will fight for what the revolution has given to it.

Propaganda is a good thing, of course. Political work is essential. But it must have an economic basis. Until now, it was not possible to impart a practical character to our propaganda. Now we can do this. The national government can create a revolutionary army. There is no more need to speculate on these so-called Left militarists. We can have our own revolutionary army. We return once again to the basic problem: to the question of creating and developing a genuine national-revolutionary army; and this depends on our ability to carry out a programme of agrarian revolution.

The Question of the Base of the Revolution

First of all, I would like to repudiate the romantic orientation toward the Northwest. This, also, is a tradition inherited from Dr Sun Yat-Sen. It, too, we must reject. The plan according to which it is necessary to withdraw to somewhere in the Northwest, further removed from places where the revolution might be attacked by imperialism, and to build a movement on a combination of various militarists' forces, can only be advanced by those who have no faith in the masses. It is clear that the Communist Party can have no place for a plan such as this. As concerns the danger of an imperialist attack, experience has shown that we will not be entirely safe, even in Mongolia. An example of this was the defeat suffered by Feng Yu-Hsiang's forces even on the other side of the Nankow Pass.

There are differences of opinion regarding the importance of Shanghai as a revolutionary base. For us there can be no doubt as to the greatest importance of Shanghai to the national revolution. In Shanghai, we have a proletariat which is organized, which possesses tremendous revolutionary experience, which has received its political training in combat. The Shanghai proletariat is the bulwark of the Chinese revolution. It alone is worth all the Left militarists put together. But there are also inconvenient aspects to Shanghai. It is the centre of the most revolutionary forces, but it is at the same time the base of imperialism. Therefore, Shanghai should not be selected as a point from which to launch an immediate attack against imperialism. This is a question of tactics. Tactically, it would be disadvantageous to convert Shanghai into a base for direct attack against imperialism. The significance of Shanghai must be defined in terms of the revolutionary movement in the entire country. As experience has shown, the Shanghai proletariat, because it is isolated from the country, is incapable of overthrowing imperialism. However, also incorrect is the theory that whoever goes to Shanghai is going to compromise with imperialism.* This holds true for the bourgeoisie. But the Shanghai proletariat will do away with imperialism. This theory merely bespeaks the absence of faith in the masses, the inability to understand the role of the proletariat. There are some who say that if Chiang Kai-Shek compromised with imperialism immediately upon his arrival in Shanghai, it follows that the proletariat, too, will be forced to make an agreement with imperialism; but to say this is to reveal your lack of understanding of the class character of society. Chiang Kai-Shek made a compromise not because he found himself in Shanghai. He went to Shanghai with just this very aim to conclude an agreement with imperialism. But the Shanghai proletariat has always fought against imperialism.

In connection with the question of the base, it is necessary to discuss the question of the Northern Expedition. One cannot formulate the question in terms of our having to go somewhere—either to the north, or to the east, or to the south. What is the basic purpose of this expedition? To develop the revolutionary movement. The essential problem is one of finding a base for the revolution. Everything else must be examined from this point of view. If the expedition promotes the consolidation of the revolution—we are for it. If its objective is to transfer the base of the revolution to somewhere in Mongolia—we are against such an expedition.

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* In his report to the Congress, Ch'en Tu-Hsiu said: "Whoever goes to Shanghai is going to a compromise with imperialism." (M.N.R.)

There was a big discussion in our Party before the beginning of the first expedition. Events have proved the wrongness of the comrades who opposed it. But events have also proved that the Communist Party was unable to take advantage of the situation created by the Northern Expedition for developing the revolution. As I have already pointed out earlier, the subjective motivation (*dvigatel'*) of the expedition was the aim of the bourgeoisie to increase its own power. But objectively, the expedition provided the possibility of developing the revolutionary forces. It was precisely in view of this objective possibility that the Communist Party led the proletariat to support the Northern Expedition. The Party supported the Northern Expedition. But did its activity correspond to objective necessity? No. The Communist Party supported the Northern Expedition, but it did not devote sufficient attention to the interests of the working class. Carried away with the expansion of the Northern Expedition, the Communists neglected the task of organizing, crystallizing, (and) consolidating the social forces of the revolution that were raised by the Northern Expedition. And it is this unreserved support of the expedition that is to a large extent responsible for Chiang Kai-Shek's success in breaking off such a considerable number of military and social forces from the national front.

If the Communist Party, while supporting the Northern Expedition, had at the same time been clearly aware of the crystallization of the forces of the bourgeoisie and its basic aims, if the Party had at the same time promoted the crystallization of the forces of the revolution, then Chiang Kai-Shek would have found himself isolated at the time of the split. One more comment, and an extremely serious one at that: one result of the unreserved support of the Northern Expedition was the loss of Kwangtung. We lost Kwangtung, because we supported the Northern Expedition without any reservations. For the sake of preserving a united front with the bourgeoisie, for the sake of the support of the Left-militarist combination, the Communist Party did not intensify the class struggle, it did not destroy the roots of reaction. After the departure of the revolutionary armies, Kwangtung—this traditional base of the revolution—was left exposed to the forces of reaction. One should guard against committing similar mistakes in connection with the second expedition. It is not a question of the North or the East, but one of consolidating the base. Only by proceeding from this point of view should we support a northern, an eastern, or a southern expedition.

This question has been repeatedly discussed in the Central Committee, even before the Congress. There is no need to repeat all these discussions here. Still, it is necessary to touch briefly upon these themes. The peculiar feature about the second expedition is its fictitious nature. It would therefore be simply absurd for the Communist Party to worry about whether or not it should support this nonexistent second expedition. Since the Northern Expedition does not exist, since the national government and the Kuomintang supporting the Northern Expedition have rejected this plan, there is no need to criticize it. And perhaps, comrades, it would be appropriate to point out that the Kuomintang has accepted the plan of the delegation of the Communist International, submitted to the Central Committee of the Party, as a counterplan to the plan (calling) for the conquest of Mukden, Peking, Mongolia, and Tibet. But then, the Central Committee rejected this plan. What has been depicted as the Northern Expedition simply amounts to the dispatch of troops to the north to assist Feng Yu-Hsiang in occupying the Lunghai railroad and, if possible, to assist Yen Hsi-Shan in occupying Peking. The Central Committee rejected this plan when it was proposed by the delegation of the Comintern, but now, after it has been accepted by the Kuomintang*, it supports it enthusiastically in the form of a plan for the Northern Expedition.

The present plan consists of advancing to the Lunghai railroad and making it possible for Feng Yu-Hsiang's forces to leave Shensi and seize Honan; then Feng, with the probable support of Yen Hsi-Shan, would move on Peking. The principal objective of this plan is to rescue the Wuhan government from the military dictatorship of T'ang Sheng-Chih. As soon as Feng Yu-Hsiang's troops occupy the Lunghai railroad, the national army will return immediately to consolidate the base of the national government by capturing Kiangsi, Kwangtung, and Fukien. Such, then, is the substance of the so-called Northern Expedition. But this is the very plan which the delegation of the Comintern advanced as an alternative to the plan that was based on the assumption that only by means of capturing Peking can the nationalist power be defended in the Yangtze Valley, that only after the territorial expansion of the revolution can the base of the revolution be intensified, that not until the Mukdenites are finally driven back beyond the Great Wall can the agrarian question be solved. The Central Committee of the Communist Party rejected the plan proposed by the delegation of the Comintern in order to support the underhanded (*mosheinnicheskii*) plan for the capture of Peking advanced by the petty bourgeoisie with the aim of deceiving the masses.

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* The initial plan for occupying Peking and Tientsin and forcing Chang Tso-Lin back into Manchuria was rejected by the Political Council of the Kuomintang and by the national government, since T'ang Sheng-Chih did not want his troops to be too far removed from his base in the Hunan and Hupeh provinces. Nevertheless, agitation under the slogan of "seizure of Peking" continued. The Kuomintang did not want to draw the attention of the masses to questions of future military achievements of the revolution. (M.N.R.)

A few words about why we did not support an immediate expedition to the north in its original version. We pointed out that it was unfeasible from the military standpoint. At that time, supporters of the Northern Expedition were saying that it was quite impossible to drive the Mukden forces back beyond the Great Wall. For this operation, the national government could have sent only two of its army corps to the north—the Fourth and the Eleventh. The second expedition could lead to the capture of Peking only if the national-revolutionary forces dissolve in the forces of Feng Yu-Hsiang and Yen Hsi-Shan; if, in other words, the revolution relies primarily on the 'Left' militarists.

I have pointed out earlier how dangerous this is. That is why we were against this project. To force Feng Yu-Hsiang and Yen Hsi-Shan to move on Peking and to try to wipe out the Fengtien forces is highly expedient, tactically speaking. However, we must not think that this would contribute to the expansion of the revolution. We cannot sacrifice the genuine base of the revolution for the sake of accomplishing this task. Only after having created and consolidated the base of the revolution in southern and central provinces which are now under the national power can we agree to such a tactic.

The Northern Expedition does not exist. The government has rejected it. Why, then, do responsible members of government speak about a fictitious nonexistent Northern Expedition? They do so, because they want to avoid an agrarian reform, because they are against the development of revolutionary forces. They want to speculate by counting on Left militarists. At present we already have occasion to hear the argument that while we are in a period of revolutionary war, we must not begin a class struggle in the village.* No agrarian reforms. We must wait for the occupation of Peking. Then we will carry out an agrarian reform.† But the Northern Expedition, after all, does not exist, and Peking will never be captured. The point here is not the Northern Expedition, but the intensification of the social base of the revolution; it is just this which should determine the Communist Party's plan of action. We support the Kuomintang and the revolutionary government on everything that promotes the intensification of the revolution. We will oppose any policy that evades this.

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* Ch'en Tu-Hsiu in his speech during the discussion of the Northern Expedition. (M.N.R.)

† Wang Ching-Wei made a statement to this effect at several public meetings. (M.N.R.)

I am appealing to you, and through you to the whole Communist Party, not to chase after illusions. Before you lies an enormous task: you must intensify the base of the revolution in order to assure its future, in order to spread the revolution over all of China.

Now we come to the extremely important question of our relations with the Kuomintang. We have entered the stage when our relations with the Kuomintang signify that we are assuming a share of the responsibility for its policy. But we cannot share the responsibility without sharing the power. The Communist Party must not support unreservedly the petty-bourgeois policy of the Kuomintang. Our support, our bloc with the Left-Wing Kuomintang should not mean that the Kuomintang decides everything while we agree with it on everything. If we intend to support the government and the Kuomintang—and we must support them—then we have to demand that all decisions on the present and the future of the national revolution be taken with the conscious participation of the proletariat acting through the Communist Party. It is necessary to recognize that in the past our relations with the Kuomintang were not what they should have been. The Communist Party usually acted as an appendage, and not as an independent force. In the Chiang Kai-Shek affair, the Kuomintang created a fracas. Its entire policy was determined by interests of petty-bourgeois prestige and not by a political line. And the Communists fully supported this absence of a political line on the part of the Kuomintang. It happens that Leftists forget who they are and go along with the Rightists—and the Communists follow them. And when the Leftists decide on a split, the Communist Party does the same. This is not an independent policy. This is not a Communist policy.

We must take stock of this past mistake in order to be able to work out the correct policy for the future. Mistakes of the past interest us only in terms of the lessons we can derive from them in order to pursue the correct policy in the future. Henceforth, our policy will be such that we will neither support nor oppose the decisions of the Kuomintang *post factum*. We must have our own say in the matter of the development of the revolution. In other words, the Communist Party must carry out the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution. This should be achieved through factional work within the Kuomintang. The Communist Party must create in various organs of the Kuomintang and the government Communist factions under the political leadership of the Central Committee so that every decision of the national government would be adopted with the consent and under the influence of the proletariat and the peasantry. Various mixed committees have been formed. Factional work becomes particularly important in such circumstances. When Communists participate in these committees, they must have a policy of their own that has been worked out beforehand and defined by the interests of the proletariat and the peasantry. Through the many different organs to which the Communists belong they must propose this policy to the national government.

The Communists have accepted two ministerial posts in the national government. At the present stage of the revolution, these ministries carry very great significance. But the point is that the Kuomintang, in offering to the Communists that they assume responsibility, does not at the same time give them any power. Officially, our comrades have been appointed ministers several months ago, but they are still virtually unable to organize their ministries. One receives the impression that the Communists were appointed ministers for reasons of propaganda. Under no circumstances must they be engaged in real work. The other ministries receive all that is necessary: a budget, premises, personnel; but the Communist ministers have nothing. They do not even have the premises. If we do not take resolute steps to change this situation, our Party will be discredited and will become the scapegoat for the petty-bourgeois policy. In the event of unrest among workers and peasants, the Kuomintang will say: 'But what can we do? We have placed two Communists at the head of ministries that are in charge of matters pertaining to the position of workers and peasants. If they have done nothing, this is not our fault, but the fault of the Communist ministers.' The Communist Party must demand that they be given power not only formally, but in practice. The Communist ministers must have a real possibility of effectively carrying out the agrarian and the labour policy of the national revolution.

The financial problem is also connected with our relations with the Kuomintang. Here, too, the petty bourgeoisie is raising a panic, shouting about the big financial difficulties. The meaning of this panic is obvious. The proletariat and the peasantry must make sacrifices to aid the national government in overcoming financial difficulties. The meaning behind this is that the masses must be prepared for sacrifices and that under no circumstances must they press for the immediate satisfaction of their demands. The communist Party must introduce revolutionary methods for overcoming financial difficulties. It is not enough to demand so-called self-discipline of the working class. This does not solve the basic problem. While agreeing to self-discipline and to slowing down the struggle against imperialism, the proletariat should say bluntly that the financial question can and must be solved by taxing the rich bourgeoisie and by carrying out an agrarian revolution, (that is to say) confiscation of land. This would increase the revenues of the state, raise the living standards of the peasantry, and expand trade which, in turn, would ease the difficult economic position of the petty bourgeoisie. This would indeed be a radical solution of the financial difficulties.

It is necessary to sound the alarm. Under the pretext of financial difficulties—it may be that this is being done unconsciously—the workers were being pushed too far back. Some of the resolutions and circulars issued by various working-class organizations with the aim of introducing so-called self-discipline in the working class, are simply disgraceful. Workers are being dragged to the revolutionary tribunal and sentenced to imprisonment for demanding higher wages. The Federation of Labour in the Hupeh province is ordering a halt to the struggle against capitalism. The proletariat is being ordered to refrain from any resistance to imperialist coercion so as 'not to weaken the bases at a moment when our armies are going to conquer Peking.' These are nothing but fables.

The petty bourgeoisie fears the revolution. Therefore, it is creating a panic and is sounding an alarm about an immediate imperialist intervention with the object of inducing the working class to agree to a policy of retreat. This means foisting petty-bourgeois defeatism on the working class. The Communist Party must save the working class from this danger. The next stage of the revolution will establish a revolutionary-democratic power. This power can be established only on the basis of the defence of the interests of workers and peasants. In other words, a revolutionary-democratic power can be created only by intensifying the base of the revolution. The question is not one of whether or not we should sharpen the class struggle. The class struggle is sharpening of itself. A class war has been declared on the workers and peasants. Only two roads are open: either to give battle and win, or be defeated. In concrete terms, we will strive for the establishment of a revolutionary democratic power, a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat, the peasantry, and the urban petty bourgeoisie on the following basis:

First of all, and at the basis of all—the agrarian revolution.

Second, the arming of peasants for defending the gains of the revolution.

Third, the organization of rural self-government for destroying the power of feudal lords in the village.

Fourth, the creation of a state machinery through which the democratic dictatorship will be realized.

Fifth, the creation of a revolutionary army, not by converting militarists into revolutionaries, but by organizing a revolutionary army on a firm, social basis.

The revolution is confronted with these tasks as a result of its own development. And it is the proletariat who must fulfil these tasks. By following this path, we will not weaken our revolutionary alliance with the petty bourgeoisie. On the contrary, we will strengthen this alliance. Only on these conditions will the petty bourgeoisie participate effectively in the revolutionary struggle. If we do not spur it on, it will begin to waver, it will liquidate the revolution and desert to the side of the reaction.

At the present stage, the hegemony of the proletariat is no longer abstract theory. It has become a living fact. And the future of the Chinese revolution depends not upon the objective forces, which are totally on its side, but upon the subjective ability of the proletariat to lead the revolution.

30 April 1927

The Proletariat and the Petty Bourgeoisie*

The discussion revealed that certain theses of my report were incorrectly understood; it is also possible that I did not expound them clearly enough. Permit me, therefore, once again to touch upon one of the most important questions in the report of the Central Committee.

First of all, I want to eliminate the confusion that Comrade Chang T'ai-Lei has created by his criticism of some of the points in my first speech. I am not about to indulge in personal attacks on Comrade Chang T'ai-Lei, but it is absolutely necessary to speak against the point of view he represents. The confusion he has created must be eliminated.

What did he say? He said: 'Because the Communist International accuses us of having Rightist tendencies (is no reason why) we must plunge immediately to the other extreme'. He considers that the line proposed by the delegation of the Communist International does not correspond to the objective situation; that it is much too Left; that it is dangerous for the Party to plunge into such extremes. Specifically, he advances the argument that we are lending a completely mechanical formulation to the question when we say that the petty bourgeoisie must either join the revolution or turn back to Chiang Kai-Shek. Let us see whether or not Comrade Chang T'ai-Lei's criticism is correct.

In the revolutionary-democratic bloc of the proletariat, the peasantry, and the petty bourgeoisie, it is the proletariat that constitutes the dominant force. The proletariat must exercise hegemony in the revolutionary struggle in order for this bloc to become an organ of democratic dictatorship. Therefore, the policy must be determined by the proletariat. The proletariat is in a position to determine the policy of this bloc. In what way is the petty-bourgeois opposition to the proletarian policy to be counteracted? Now, when the bourgeoisie has turned against the revolution, the petty bourgeoisie is left with two courses: either to join the revolution, or to reject it; either to save itself under the leadership of the proletariat, or to follow the bourgeoisie into the camp of the counter-revolution. There is nothing mechanical about this point of view. Chang T'ai-Lei thinks that our policy is so far to the Left that we are closing to the petty bourgeoisie the possibility of joining us. It is a well-known fact that the petty bourgeoisie never represents an independent political force. It joins either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. In the present period of the revolution, the petty bourgeoisie will join the proletariat not on the strength of a conscious choice; it will join the proletariat and will participate in the revolutionary-democratic bloc, because under existing conditions the petty bourgeoisie in China is an oppressed class. For this reason, it must join the bloc of oppressed classes. Under certain circumstances, the bourgeoisie may offer the petty bourgeoisie certain privileges, certain economic rights, and then the petty bourgeoisie joins the bourgeoisie. But in China the bourgeoisie is so weak itself that it is not in a position to toss a hand-out (*brosit' podachku*) to the petty bourgeoisie in order to draw it over to its side.

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* Roy's second speech at the Fifth Congress of the CCP, 3 May 1927; included in *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia*. SNR

Imperialism is exploiting and oppressing the petty bourgeoisie. Therefore, the petty bourgeoisie objectively stands closer to the proletariat than to the bourgeoisie. Thanks to this objective class alignment, a revolutionary-democratic bloc can be created on the condition that the proletariat determines its policy and the petty bourgeoisie joins the proletariat on the revolutionary path.

In European countries, the petty bourgeoisie does not represent an independent force; this is even less possible in China. It is unable to provide an independent political existence for itself. Once it rejects the revolutionary-democratic bloc, it will have to return to the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. This is what I said. And I would like to know what is mechanical about it.

In criticizing my point of view and in labelling it mechanical, Comrade Chang T'ai-Lei has something else in mind. He thinks that the policy we proposed will destroy the revolutionary-democratic bloc. If this is the point, then a very serious question arises here which it is necessary to examine.

What is there in our proposal that can be considered as being too far Left? We are proposing a programme dictated to the movement by the objective development of social forces. The fundamental question at issue between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang, that is, the petty bourgeoisie, concerns the solution of the agrarian problem at the present stage of the revolution. The principal argument of Chang T'ai-Lei is that our proposed agrarian programme of the national revolution is much too Left. The petty bourgeoisie will not accept it and, as a result, the revolutionary bloc will fall apart. The basic demand of our agrarian platform is a partial confiscation of land—the confiscation of large landholdings. This suggestion is not ours. It is what the peasants are, in fact, carrying out. The national revolution has developed into an agrarian revolution. Two courses lie before the Communist Party: either to support the peasant demands on land, or to retard the development of the agrarian revolution for the sake of good relations with the petty bourgeoisie. I do not believe that anyone in our Party would hesitate in the choice of his decision. Every member of our Party considers that in the situation that has arisen the Communist Party must support the peasantry in its struggle. The proletariat cannot betray the peasantry for the sake of buying an alliance with the petty bourgeoisie. Moreover, the agrarian revolution corresponds to the interests not only of the peasantry, but of the petty bourgeoisie as well. The proletariat will win the support of the petty bourgeoisie in the revolutionary-democratic struggle by explaining to it its real interests, by freeing it from feudal-bourgeois influence. But this can be done only in the process of a genuine revolutionary struggle. And it must be achieved through action. The petty bourgeoisie must become convinced that there is no middle road between revolution and counter-revolution.

When the proletariat tries to convince the petty bourgeoisie that the agrarian problem is an objective necessity of the given period of the revolution, it is not foisting anything on it, but is merely trying to evoke in it an awareness of its own class interests. This in itself means exercising hegemony in the revolutionary-democratic bloc. Being the motive power of this bloc, the proletariat must intensify the revolutionary struggle by such demands which correspond objectively to the interests of its allies—the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie—but which are not advanced by them independently in view of their political backwardness. Such a tactic not only will not threaten the integrity of the revolutionary bloc, but will merely serve to strengthen it.

I do not intend to explain in detail here the advantageousness of a radical agrarian reform to both the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. I will restrict myself to a few comments. What will be the immediate result of a radical agrarian reform? Innumerable forms of the feudal-military bureaucracy, hampering the development of the economic life of the country, will be abolished. Owing to the fact that a considerable part of the land rental is paid in kind, agricultural products are being concentrated in the hands of feudal-bureaucratic elements. Taking advantage of this monopoly and inflating the prices, the landowners exploit the producing peasantry, on the one hand, and the proletariat and the urban petty bourgeoisie, on the other. If, in the order of agrarian reforms, measures are adopted for abolishing this monopoly on agricultural products, prices will decline. This will benefit the urban population; the existing system of feudal-capitalistic exploitation deprives the peasantry of all surplus; moreover, the peasants are often unable to satisfy even the most elementary vital needs. The peasantry finds itself constantly on the verge of starvation. If, as a result of agrarian reforms, the economic position of the peasants improves, it will bring about the flourishing of internal trade. The peasantry will be in a position to sell more and buy more, thereby increasing the volume of trade. The town tradesmen will derive their benefits from this.

Such are the direct advantages accruing to the petty bourgeoisie from a radical agrarian reform. But due to its shortsightedness and to its economic and political backwardness, brought about by feudal conditions, the petty bourgeoisie is unable to understand that the agrarian reform is advantageous to it. We are faced with the question of whether the proletariat should really become the leader and awaken in the petty bourgeoisie an awareness of its class interests, thus strengthening the revolutionary-democratic bloc, or whether it should, out of faulty considerations, reject this hegemony. This is the whole question. To doubt the correctness of the policy suggested by the Communist International, to consider that this policy contains the danger of 'radicalism' (*levizna*), means to doubt that at the present stage of the Chinese revolution the proletariat is capable of exercising its hegemony in the struggle.

I want to touch upon still another question. It was said here (also by Comrade Chang T'ai-Lei) that there are elements of passiveness in the policy proposed by the delegation of the Comintern. The criticism was directed particularly against my point of view concerning the so-called Left-militarists. The delegation of the Communist International considers that at the present stage of the development the revolution cannot rely primarily on the support of the so-called Left militarists. Those who see elements of passiveness in this viewpoint believe that the most effective activity of the revolution consists of manoeuvring with the so-called Left militarists. In their opinion, the Left militarists comprise the basic force of the revolution. In my first speech, I pointed out the danger of overestimating the importance of the 'Left' militarists and stated why the revolution must be freed from the domination of the corrupt (*prodazhnyi*) hired militarist forces.

The delegation of the Comintern is by no means defending the policy of passiveness. On the contrary, we proposed to the Congress a programme of intensive action. We rejected the viewpoint which appraised the next period of the revolution as a period of decline, and established that the revolution stands before the prospect of intensive activity. We came out against the theory of retreat and defense. We condemned this theory as defeatist. We do not think that political action consists entirely of manoeuvring with the 'Left' militarists.

A programme that can be carried out only through the revolutionary action of proletarian and peasant masses is not a programme of passiveness. We propose that the Communist Party act jointly with the masses, relying on an organized bond with the workers' and peasants' unions which unite over ten million members. One must look for passiveness and defeatism in comrades who criticize our programme as being too Left. These comrades are suggesting retreat at a time when the objective conditions require a bold advance. To satisfy the petty bourgeoisie, they are creating a theory of so-called self-discipline of the masses. They are demoralizing the movement by an inadmissible spirit of defeatism. The danger of radicalism (*levizna*) does not threaten the Chinese Communist Party. But a danger from the Right does exist with it, and we must fight with this.

Permit me to cite an example of how the theory of self-discipline expresses itself. A few days ago, the so-called revolutionary tribunal,* at the request of the national government, sentenced a workers' picket to three months' imprisonment for demanding a wage increase. The Federation of Labour in Hupeh issued an appeal to workers, calling upon the workers to terminate all struggle against capitalism for the duration of the Northern Expedition. In the same appeal, workers in foreign enterprises are urged not to strike, but to direct their complaints to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This capitalist tactic is being pursued in the name of avoiding further aggravation of relations between the national government and imperialism. A member of the Communist Party, the chief editor of the central organ of the Kuomintang, writes in the editorial of 1 May that workers must be prepared for sacrifices; they must work not only 16, but 20 hours.

Here is another example of defeatism and capitulationism, and it is very serious. In my speech at the opening of the Congress, I said that in the present period the base of the revolution will be the democratic bloc of the proletariat, the peasantry, and the petty bourgeoisie, and that the proletariat will become the leading force of this bloc. Speaking at that same meeting, a representative of the Kuomintang declared that the Communist Party is the party of the proletariat, whereas the peasantry must be led by the Kuomintang. It is obvious that this was said in reply to my words. This was a challenge to the Communist Party. The Kuomintang has declared war on the Communist Party. The Kuomintang has announced its intention to fight the Communists for the leadership of the peasantry. It has warned the Communist Party not to go to the peasantry with a programme of an agrarian revolution.

And so, speaking at the congress two days later, Comrade T'an

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* By order of the Kuomintang, the trade unions have established co-called revolutionary tribunals for the propagation of 'revolutionary self-discipline' among workers. (M. N. R.)

P'ing-Shan, ostensibly with the aim of restoring peace with the Kuomintang, said at the Congress: 'We are the party of the proletariat, while the Kuomintang can conduct work among the peasantry', What does this signify? In practice, the supporters of passiveness are those very comrades who are so afraid of in any way offending our petty-bourgeois allies. To concede the peasantry to the Kuomintang which is openly opposed to any agrarian reform, and to conduct negotiations with reactionary generals—such are the actions proposed by the critics of the line of the Comintern delegation.

One more comment. In discussing the question of the base of the revolution, many comrades have said that Hupeh and Hunan are not sufficient. This is perfectly right. But we, in our proposals, have never said that we must remain in Hunan and Hupeh. We propose to strengthen the base of the revolution in those provinces where the national revolution has been partially accomplished. We do not propose to lock ourselves in Hupeh and Hunan. It is natural that the consolidation of the revolutionary base must begin in these provinces, because it is here that the peasant movement is most developed and it is here that we have the opportunity of continuing our work. But this does not mean that we must work in these two provinces alone. If we neglect work in places where we do have the opportunity, if we refuse to intensify the revolution in any region in expectation of the time when the whole country will be under the power of the national government—then we will lose both Hupeh and Hunan, just as we have lost Kwangtung.

We do not for a minute belittle the necessity of fighting against militarism and the bourgeois reaction. The Mukden forces must be destroyed, and Chang Tso-Lin must be crushed. But to say this is one thing, and to crush him is another. What is the use of forming vainglorious plans for driving back the Mukden forces beyond the Great Wall when we do not have the requisite power?

The revolution must develop in the social as well as in the territorial sense. It must be intensified and expanded. Chang Tso-Lin must be overthrown. Chiang Kai-Shek and his neomilitarism must be destroyed. These are the tasks of the revolution. We must prepare the forces necessary for accomplishing these tasks. The bourgeoisie has deserted to the side of counter-revolution. The petty bourgeoisie is wavering. Therefore, the correct tactic at the given stage of the revolution is one which undermines the strength of the reaction and unleashes the fighting energy of the masses.

In conclusion, I will say a few words about the achievements of the Chinese Communist Party.

The discussion has centred chiefly on the mistakes and the shortcomings of the Party. Nevertheless, this discussion has been of great value, and the Party stands to gain extremely by it. The criticism of the Right-Wing deviations, the condemnation of defeatist theories and the warning about capitulationist tendencies—all this merely serves to strengthen the Party which, after this Congress, will become prepared for the great struggle to come. Taking stock of the achievements of the Party gives us a clear perspective and convinces us that the revolution is not on the decline, but on the rise. In two years, the Party has grown from 900 members to 50,000. This phenomenal growth has occurred under conditions of revolutionary struggle. It tells that 50,000 Party members represent a strong revolutionary army which has proven its ability to lead the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle. The gigantic growth of the Party is one more proof of the fact that the perspective of the development of the revolution is correct. The history of the Party proves that in the last two years the proletariat has, in the process of struggle, become the motive power of the national revolution.

The Chinese Communist Party is a young party. Not possessing sufficient experience, it has naturally made mistakes and displayed weakness. Nevertheless, the Communist Party has demonstrated that it is the only political force in the country which stands staunchly for the revolution. It will discard all Menshevik and conciliatory tendencies which have become manifest in its ranks. There is no place for Menshevism and opportunism in a party that has matured in revolutionary struggle. The Chinese Section of the Communist International is a mass party in the real sense of this word, and it will become a genuine Bolshevik party. If the Chinese labouring masses—the workers and the peasants—will be led in the revolution by the Bolshevik mass party, the success of the revolution is assured. From discussions that have taken place at this Congress, the Party will emerge stronger, more experienced, more developed; it will demonstrate its ability to lead the revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

3 May 1927

The Perspectives and the Character of the Chinese Revolution*

The delegation of the Communist International intends to deliver a summary report on the theses of the Seventh Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on the question of the Chinese revolution and on the question of the international situation.

The Communist International had the opportunity of determining a clear perspective of the Chinese revolution and of setting before the Chinese Communist Party concrete tasks with respect to the subsequent development of the revolution, because it gave an analysis of its past and of the paths of its development without separating these questions from questions of the world revolutionary movement.

The theses which the delegation of the Communist International is submitting for the examination of the Fifth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party are the result of the most careful analysis of not only the Chinese, but also the international situation.

The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern had very great significance. It discussed and adopted resolutions on a series of questions of world-wide importance: on the domestic and international situation of the U.S.S.R., on the general strike in England and the lockout of miners, and on the Chinese revolution. In its significance, this plenum can be equalled to a world Congress.

At the plenum, a number of questions were discussed relating to the development of the world revolution. Among them, the question of the development, the character, and the perspectives of the Chinese revolution was one of the most important. The discussion of these problems was determined by a correct appraisal of the basic problem of the stabilization of the capitalist world. Can the world economy become stabilized on a capitalist basis? This question was subjected to thorough examination. The question of the stabilization of capitalism is, in the given epoch, the most decisive one for all world-political problems. A correct appraisal of the position of the capitalist world is necessary not only for determining the tactics of the Communist parties in capitalist countries, but is also necessary for working out a distinct perspective of the development of the Chinese revolution and for understanding its character.

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* Roy's Report to the Fifth Congress of the CCP on the Theses of the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI; included in *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia*. SNR

During the past few years, there was a certain amount of uncertainty, even confusion, on the question of the stabilization of capitalism. Following the world war began a period of intensive revolutionary activity. The world was enveloped by a gigantic wave of revolutions. In a series of European countries, especially in the defeated countries, the revolution became an accomplished fact. On the other hand, in colonial countries there developed a powerful movement for national liberation. This period was interpreted as being a period of world revolution. And the tactics of the Communist International were aimed at leading the proletariat into an attack on capitalism in order to overthrow it and to establish socialism.

But this period ended in a series of defeats for the revolution. Its concluding event was the utter defeat of the German revolution in October of 1923. A result of the temporary defeat of the revolutionary movement in a number of major countries was that capitalism began to strive for stabilization. The abatement of the revolutionary wave gave birth to the theory that capitalism has not yet played its role out to the end, that the world can still develop within the framework of a capitalist system. The social-democratic leaders came forward as the heralds of this theory of defeatism and fatalism. Social democracy even advanced the theory that the economic development of the world is still in need of capitalism, that subsequent development can occur only under conditions of a capitalist organization of production.

During the period of reaction which followed the defeat of the German revolution, this theory demoralized certain elements even in the ranks of Communist parties. When capitalism becomes a definitely reactionary force obstructing the economic and cultural development of society, then the struggle for the immediate establishment of socialism is necessary and inevitable. But if it is true that capitalism can still become stabilized, that the application of capitalist methods and principles of production is necessary for the subsequent economic development of the world, then a struggle that assumes the offensive does not enter into the task of the proletariat. In that case, the correct tactic for the revolutionary proletariat would be not a direct offensive, but the development of its forces, the winning of allies, and the preparation for a decisive struggle that would begin at a favourable moment. The essence of the social-democratic theory of the stabilization of capitalism adds up to the following: capitalism continues to play a progressive role—capitalism is still necessary to world development. In other words, the world is still going through a period of bourgeois revolution. It still has not entered the period of the proletarian revolution whose aim is the establishment of socialism.

In view of such confusion in the conceptions of the world situation, the Comintern found it necessary to subject the question to penetrating analysis in order to provide a correct appraisal of the position of capitalism. After a thorough scientific analysis of the world economic situation, the Seventh Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern ascertained the presence of a temporary capitalist stabilization and established at the same time that the theory according to which capitalism can still contribute to the development of the world economy cannot withstand criticism. Facts demonstrate, however, that the bourgeoisie has succeeded in repelling the forces of the revolution and has thus created conditions (which allow) for attempts to stabilize capitalism. Capitalism can strengthen its position only by means of lowering the living standards of the working class in its parent country and suppressing the liberation movement in the colonies. In other words, attempts to stabilize capitalism inevitably lead to the destruction of domestic markets and to colonial wars which, in turn, reduce the foreign market. The precariousness of such stabilization thus becomes obvious. Stabilization is the result of but a temporary victory of the bourgeoisie.

The following facts tell of the stabilization of capitalism:

1. Adjustment of currency circulation: A series of leading capitalist countries have passed through a period of inflation. Money had virtually lost its value. The entire credit system was destroyed. This situation has now changed. In a number of countries, the currency has been stabilized. The value of paper money has been restored.

2. Growth of production: Immediately after the war, industry was gripped by a depression which entailed the rise of unemployment. At present this situation, too, has changed. The growth of production is occurring in a series of capitalist countries.

3. Expansion of trade: The growth of industry also served accordingly to develop trade. In the past year, the volume of foreign trade showed a marked increase.

All these factors demonstrate that the position of capitalism has improved.

On the other hand, there are facts which bespeak the transient nature of the stabilization, namely:

1. The uneven and unstable nature of the growth of industry and commerce.

2. The large disparity between the production apparatus and the actual volume of production. The growth of industry does not correspond to the enormous development of the production apparatus during and after the war.

3. The decline of the British Empire.

4. The decline of capitalism in France. During the depression and the post-war crisis, France was in a relatively better position. At a time when almost all the capitalist countries were suffering from chronic unemployment associated with the depression in trade, France knew no unemployment. As a result of the Versailles treaty which crippled Germany, France turned into a first-class capitalist power. At the present time, France, too, has entered a period of crisis, the signs of which are the constantly growing unemployment and monetary inflation.

5. America is the only country with capitalist prosperity. But even there, signs of depression and crisis can be observed.

6. The gigantic economic development of the U.S.S.R.

7. The national-revolutionary movement in China which menaces the very existence of imperialism.

In spite of the period of temporary stabilization, the crisis of capitalism continues. The temporary stabilization is but a short spike (*interruption*) on a general downward curve. The nature of the present crisis is most peculiar. It is a crisis of at once overproduction and underproduction. Production must be increased with the aim of expanding trade. Otherwise, attempts at stabilization will prove unsuccessful. But there is no way that the actual volumes of production can be made to reach the level of the productive capacity of the industrial apparatus. Therefore, in spite of the relative growth of production, the crisis of underproduction remains basically unresolved. On the other hand, even with this limited growth of production there still remains the crisis of overproduction.

As a result of the war and the 'rationalization' (system of 'streamlining') of industry, the buying power of the internal market has diminished considerably. The capitalist 'rationalization' reduces wages and creates unemployment. The stabilization of capitalism is being achieved at the price of destroying markets. One of the methods of stabilization is the capital's attack on the wages of the working class. This method entails the diminution of the buying power of the internal market. As a result, the necessity of new markets arises. We are returning to the situation which led to the World War of 1914. The race for markets is a characteristic feature of the contemporary international situation. As a result of the growing competition, the world is confronted with the threat of a new war, one even more burdensome and more destructive than the last war.

The revolt of the colonial peoples has, on the other hand, decreased the possibility of creating overseas markets. In fact, the markets in a number of colonial countries have already shrunk to a considerable extent. In some countries, the shrinkage of markets was caused by chronic colonial wars. In other countries, it is the result of the growth of local industry. In yet others—a typical example of which is China—a serious threat is developing to the domination of imperialism itself.

In the current situation, the following conditions are necessary for the stabilization of world capitalism:

1. Further lowering of the living standard of the proletariat in the parent country, that is, the further destruction of the internal market.

2. The preservation of colonial markets and their further development. This requires the successful suppression of colonial uprisings. But in some of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the national-liberation movement has taken such deep roots that it can be liquidated only by means of protracted military action. This applies especially to China. However, predatory wars for the purpose of maintaining imperialist domination in the colonies destroy colonial trade and thereby weaken the base of imperialism.

The conditions necessary for the stabilization of capitalism may, consequently, be created only by further destroying the markets which are so necessary for capitalist stabilization. From this follows the conclusion that firm stabilization of capitalism is impossible. The perspectives for the development of revolution in capitalist as well as in colonial countries become clear in the light of such an appraisal of the world situation. This appraisal has permitted the Communist International to outline distinct perspectives for the development of the Chinese revolution.

Under the objective, international conditions of the present, the Chinese revolution will develop into a gigantic force for the destruction of capitalism. It is one of the most powerful factors militating against the stabilization of capitalism.

The Theses on the Chinese Situation of the Seventh Plenum of the Comintern do not derive from a casual analysis of the world situation. The Communist International began to study the colonial question and to develop its conception of the colonial revolution back in the time of the Second Congress in 1920. The perspective of the non-capitalist development of the Chinese revolution was advanced by Comrade Lenin in the Second Congress when he indicated the possibility of the non-capitalist development of colonies. The revolutionary movement in the colonies occurring in the period of the decline of capitalism is, essentially, an anti-capitalist force. It is an instrument for the overthrow of capitalism.

At first, the leadership of the colonial revolution belongs to the native (*tuzemnaia*) bourgeoisie. The colonial revolution has as its aim not only the overthrow of imperialism. Before it lies yet another task—that of the abolition of native feudalism. The colonial revolution is generated by a contradiction between imperialism and the native bourgeoisie and, at the same time, it assumes objectively the role of an anti-feudal force. As a result, it acquires the character of a bourgeois revolution.

In the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International, the colonial revolution was portrayed as a bourgeois revolution, But, at the same time, in his speech at the Congress, Comrade Lenin pointed to the possibility of non-capitalist development. Neither in the theses nor in Lenin's speech was it said that the liberation movement in the colonies must develop inevitably as a purely bourgeois revolution thus creating conditions for the capitalist development of the colonies. The experience of colonial revolutions from the time of this Congress and the Chinese revolution, in particular, have demonstrated that in the process of the development of the revolutionary movement the national bourgeoisie deserts the revolution and even turns against it; that the revolution does not remain under bourgeois leadership to the end. In countries where the bourgeoisie remains as the leader, the revolution perishes, the anti-imperialist struggle weakens, and the bourgeoisie compromises with imperialism. The development of the revolution in colonies inevitably outgrows the bourgeois leadership, and the leadership of the revolution passes to non-bourgeois elements. When the bourgeoisie leads a revolution directed against feudalism, it does so in the name of establishing capitalism in as much as feudalism interferes with capitalist development. But when the task of abolishing feudalism is accomplished by a colonial revolution that is led by a more revolutionary class and not by bourgeois elements, then the liquidation of feudalism is no longer accomplished for the purpose of establishing capitalism. The revolution then goes beyond these narrow frames. So far as the revolution destroys feudalism, it still retains the objective character of a bourgeois revolution. But its results go beyond the establishment of capitalism. It ushers in a period of non-capitalist economic development that leads directly to socialism.

Such are the basic considerations which enabled the Communist International to advance before the Chinese revolution the perspective of non-capitalist development. In the process of the development of the Chinese revolution, facts have demonstrated the correctness of the analysis of the Communist International. How was it possible to arrive at such a correct analysis of the future? This was easy to do thanks to the clear and correct understanding of the world situation as a whole.

One of the conditions for the stabilization of capitalism is the suppression of colonial revolutions. In carrying out this task, imperialism can no longer count on its former allies in the colonies. In the past, the imperialist power in the colonies drew its support, on the one hand, from reactionary, feudal elements (their expression in China is militarism); on the other hand, its existence was favoured by the passivity of the broad national masses. The first gave active support to imperialism. Since their own existence was dependent upon the continuation of imperialist rule, they became active allies of imperialism. The second (the broad national masses) were a passive factor in as much as they did not revolt against imperialist exploitation. The development of the national-liberation movement involved these masses in a widespread revolutionary struggle. As long as imperialism was not threatened with mass uprisings, the support of the feudal elements sufficed. However, in recent years, it became increasingly difficult for imperialism to maintain its rule in China with a base composed exclusively of feudal-militarist elements. The ease with which the national-revolutionary army routed the northern militarists in the Yangtze Valley serves as proof of this. Hence, imperialism is seeking to expand its social base in the colonies. This opens up the possibility of a compromise between imperialism and the upper strata of the bourgeoisie.

The gigantic development of the revolution went beyond the narrow confines of bourgeois leadership. The bourgeoisie sensed the threat of danger. It feared that the movement would not confine itself to establishing conditions for capitalist development, that the revolution might go further. On the other hand, the willingness of imperialism to make certain concessions to the native bourgeoisie in order to assure itself of continued colonial exploitation showed to the colonial bourgeoisie that provided it collaborated with imperialism, its economic growth was still possible. Its development can also transpire under imperialist rule. Hence, the national bourgeoisie is trying to narrow down the aims of the revolution and to lead it to make a deal with imperialism. By acting in such manner, the bourgeoisie is betraying the national revolution; it is running to the side of the counter-revolution, entering a united front with imperialism, and turning into an instrument for the destruction of the revolution. At this stage, the leadership of the revolution is passing into the hands of those classes which are being exploited by imperialism, which have no grounds for making a compromise and, consequently, the interests of which require the complete overthrow of imperialism and a radical democratization of the country.

The removal of the bourgeoisie from the leadership of the revolution and the transfer of leadership to the more revolutionary classes—the bloc of the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry, and the proletariat—make the Chinese revolution an inseparable part of the world revolution. Under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, the national revolution would end with a deal with imperialism. China would become a base for the development of capitalism thus contributing to its stabilization. However, the Chinese revolution is now moving in the direction of establishing a political power which not only would not contribute to the development of capitalism in China, but would lead to the establishment of socialism.

Thus, the Chinese revolution is becoming an inseparable part of the world revolution. In the present epoch, it is, strictly speaking, the most important, leading participant in the world revolutionary struggle. Already the assistance that it is giving to the world proletariat in its struggle for socialism is not merely indirect. It has become the direct instrument of the struggle for socialism in the whole world. Since this is so, the danger of an imperialist intervention in China is becoming real. The development of the Chinese revolution under the leadership of the revolutionary-democratic bloc will be a severe blow to attempts at stabilizing world capitalism. For this reason, imperialism is concentrating all its forces on crushing the Chinese revolution. However, it follows from our evaluation of the international situation that these efforts on the part of imperialism will prove unsuccessful. The danger of an imperialist intervention does exist. Measures must be taken to parry it. But it must also be known that an imperialist intervention cannot crush the Chinese revolution. Mutual competition and the fight for colonial markets constitute the basic features of the contemporary international situation. Most of all, capitalism now stands in need of markets. Intervention in China prevents the realization of this immediate necessity. An attempt by imperialism to crush the Chinese revolution by military intervention will be extremely detrimental to the position of capitalism in its parent countries. Attempts at smashing the Chinese revolution will merely precipitate the destruction of capitalism in its parent countries. Imperialism is unable even to effect a prolonged economic blockade of China, since this would prove to be a two-edged sword. An economic blockade would be no less detrimental to the interests of imperialism than it would to China itself. It has already once been shown (during the Russian revolution) how the revolution is capable of resisting a blockade. In the present period, however, when the very existence of capitalism hinges on its ability to find new markets—and China is a market of tremendous importance—a prolonged blockade would deprive imperialism of the opportunity of using the Chinese market. This would cause enormous damage to imperialism.

Furthermore, an armed intervention or a prolonged economic blockade would intensify the competition and the internal contradictions between the various imperialist powers. While one or several of the imperialist powers which have already invested considerable capital in China may want to maintain unconditional political dominance in the country for the sake of preserving their interests, the other powers might be interested in creating a situation that would open opportunities for further development of trade. Contradictions exist even within each of the imperialist powers. One segment of the bourgeoisie, namely, the financiers and bankers, is in favour of war in China for the sake of defending the capital investments; the industrial bourgeoisie, however, is opposed to war: it wants peace in order to trade with China. Under such circumstances, the danger of imperialist intervention is not immediate. Imperialism knows that it cannot afford either the luxury of a war with China or the creation of a prolonged economic blockade. Hence, it is pursuing a policy of intimidation. It knows that if in a short time it succeeds in terrorizing the national government and in forcing it into submission, it will find itself the master of the situation. But imperialism will have to alter its policy if the national-revolutionary government is able to hold out for some time. The danger lies in an imperialist intervention of another order. It is the imperialist policy of demoralizing the national government that is dangerous.

The fundamental principle of the policy of imperialism is that of promoting the seizure of the leadership of the revolution by such classes as would lead the revolution to compromise with imperialism and thereby create conditions for the development of capitalism in China. As it turned out, it was impossible to subject the national-revolutionary movement as a whole to the leadership of the bourgeoisie. Then it was split with the aim of creating a second centre under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, supported and inspired by imperialism. In this lies the real danger of imperialist intervention. This is the basic threat to the future development of the revolution. The only guarantee against this danger is the development and the intensification of the revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat. The revolution, led by the revolutionary-democratic alliance of the proletariat, the peasantry, and the urban petty bourgeoisie, must assume a decisive offensive against the social base of the feudal-bourgeois classes.

Let us now turn to the question of the perspectives of the Chinese revolution from the point of view of the internal alignment of class forces. Although the revolution is to a large extent determined by the international situation, basically its development will correspond to the existing class relations in the native society. One should look at whether the bourgeoisie is able to lead a struggle against imperialism and feudalism given the present alignment of class forces. It is necessary to clarify whether the perspective of the non-capitalist development of the Chinese revolution is a mechanical concept or one which follows from the objective conditions that exist in the country.

The structure of the Chinese society is for the most part feudal. The overwhelming majority of the population lives in the village. The urban population constitutes the minority. The national economy is still widely subjected to the dominance of feudal or semi-feudal relations. This backwardness of the Chinese society is to a large degree the result of the pernicious effect of imperialism. Imperialism has kept the Chinese society in a state of backwardness. The Chinese people are interested in the struggle against imperialism, because a radical change in existing socio-economic relations will only be possible after the destruction of their basic cause—imperialism. The social task of the Chinese revolution in the present epoch consists of destroying feudalism and of creating conditions for the free development of economic forces. This task, in a number of Western countries, has been accomplished by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois revolution created conditions for capitalist development. Are there any grounds to assume that it will be any different in China? That the revolution will not be a bourgeois revolution and will not lead to the establishment of conditions for the development of capitalism?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to give an analysis of the position of the Chinese bourgeoisie. The Chinese bourgeoisie is weak and undeveloped. That segment of the bourgeoisie which is comparatively better developed in the economic respect, that is, the *compradores* and the banker's group, is extremely closely associated with imperialism. This segment will never join the anti-imperialist struggle. An independent industrial bourgeoisie is almost non-existent. It is very weak. It is not in a position to lead the peasantry in a struggle against feudalism.

In contrast to Europe, the Chinese bourgeoisie did not grow out of the handicraft industry. The handicraft base of the Chinese bourgeoisie was destroyed by the interference of imperialism. The Chinese bourgeoisie sprung primarily from the landowning classes and is even now very closely connected with the feudal strata. Even the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia is closely connected with the feudal system of land ownership. Therefore, not only the bourgeoisie, but also a certain segment of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, are objectively incapable of, and are subjectively even hostile to, the cause of realizing the social aim of the Chinese revolution—the destruction of feudalism.

At the present stage of its development, the anti-imperialist struggle coincides with the struggle against feudalism. Therefore, the bourgeoisie is no longer capable of continuing the struggle against imperialism.

The social aim of the revolution—the overthrow of feudalism— is closely connected with its anti-imperialist character. The Chinese people must fight against imperialism. But, as a result of imperialist rule, the entire national economy is still under the yoke of feudal relations. The bourgeoisie and a segment of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia are so intertwined with the feudal economy, while comprising an integral part of the feudal structure of the Chinese society, that they cannot lead a revolutionary struggle against imperialism, for a decisive struggle against it develops inevitably into a struggle against feudalism and its political expression.

Only by weakening the feudal support (*opora*) of the bourgeoisie will imperialism be really destroyed and definitely overthrown. The bourgeoisie cannot lead a revolution that leads to its own downfall. Events have proved the correctness of this theoretical principle. The bourgeoisie deserted the revolutionary front (and) turned against it, because the path of the revolution's attack against imperialism runs through the destruction of feudalism. This is why in the theses of the Communist International it is clearly stated that in the present epoch the Chinese revolution is first of all an agrarian revolution. And since, owing to their origin, their social bonds and economic interests, the bourgeoisie and a certain segment of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia are opposed to an agrarian revolution, they cannot lead the revolution and must, therefore, go against it. These elements have withdrawn from the revolution and have turned objectively into an instrument of imperialism. The attempts of imperialism to alter the character of the Chinese revolution, to deflect it from its objective perspective of non-capitalist development, are calculated on these traitorous classes. There exists the possibility of a third party arising, a bourgeois-national party which would screen itself behind a false banner of nationalism. This means that there is the prospect of a struggle for hegemony between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Two perspectives lie before the Chinese revolution.

One points to a development along bourgeois-democratic lines. This perspective means the onset of a period of capitalist development under the hegemony of imperialist finance capital; this perspective means China's conversion into an instrument for the stabilization of capitalism. This perspective means the defeat of the Chinese revolution. The objective conditions, national as well as international, belie such a perspective. But subjectively, imperialism and the reactionary classes, including the national bourgeoisie, support the perspective of an imperialist intervention and the defeat of the Chinese revolution.

The second perspective is the path of non-capitalist development.

The international situation as well as the internal class forces incline in the direction of this perspective. The Kuomintang, the national-revolutionary government and the Communist Party are the subjective forces created by this perspective.

The national government is the political and military organ of the revolutionary-democratic classes, whereas the Communist Party is the political spokesman for the interests of workers and peasants.

The development of a revolution, such as in China, is new in the history of mankind. Nowhere has the revolution developed in a way such as in China. Being a new type of a revolution, it will bring to life a new type of a revolutionary state. Since the revolution will be under the leadership of a bloc consisting of the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the proletariat, the revolutionary state of the given period cannot become a class state. It will be a petty-bourgeois state, but, in addition, a revolutionary petty-bourgeois state. Never yet in the history of mankind has a petty-bourgeois state been revolutionary; in China, however, it will be revolutionary thanks to its anti-imperialist character. The Communist Party is entering the national-revolutionary government, because it is the government of a revolutionary state. This is not a reformist coalition. The Communist Party is entering the government, because this is a revolutionary government. At the present stage of the revolution, hegemony in the struggle belongs to the proletariat, and it is participating in the national-revolutionary government in order to use the state machinery as an instrument for achieving hegemony.

Since the revolution still draws its support from a coalition of classes and does not possess a purely proletarian character, the proletariat cannot become the sole leader of this revolution. But the proletariat is the most important, dominant factor in this coalition and will be the one which determines the policy of this bloc. The Communist Party is the party of the proletariat and fights for socialism. But there are also other classes which participate in the struggle that is leading directly to socialism; not being proletarian, they cannot join the party of the proletariat. The immediate struggle in which these classes participate and which leads directly to the struggle for socialism is likewise a struggle of the proletariat. Therefore, the proletariat participates in and guides the development of this struggle in the direction of socialism.

Such are the considerations which determine the relations between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang at the present stage of the revolution. The development of the revolution has turned the Kuomintang from a tenuous coalition of classes in which the dominant factor was the bourgeoisie and even the feudal elements into an organ of democratic dictatorship. In other words, the Kuomintang, in its present social composition, can become and has already become an instrument through which the hegemony of the proletariat can be exercised. The three classes participating in the Kuomintang are interested in having the Chinese revolution develop in a non-capitalist direction, because capitalism exploits and oppresses all three of these classes. The difference lies in the fact that the proletariat is consciously fighting for socialism whereas the other two classes—the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie—although they seek objectively the same goal, are moving toward it unconsciously.

Under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, the very same classes, that is, the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, could become an instrument for the development of capitalism. Finding themselves under the hegemony of the proletariat as a consequence of the development of the revolution, they have become a factor in the struggle for socialism. The state, created by the revolution and based on these three classes, is therefore an instrument of the dictatorship not of one class, but an organ of the dictatorship of three classes, an organ of a democratic dictatorship. This state represents a dictatorship, because it is not a bourgeois-democratic state. It will be a dictatorship, because it will be an instrument for the suppression of counter-revolutionary classes. It will be a dictatorship, because it will be an instrument of the agrarian revolution and of the abolition of feudal classes. It will be a dictatorship, because in the near future it will become an instrument for the abolition of the large-scale bourgeoisie through nationalization of large-scale industry and public utilities.

The base of the capitalist development of the country will remain untouched if the land, the large-scale industry, the railroads, and waterways are not nationalized. The revolutionary state becomes a dictatorship, because through it must be destroyed the base of capitalism in China.

If this democratic dictatorship does not fulfil this task, it will betray the interests of the three classes from which it draws its support.

If this revolutionary bloc is unable to carry out the dictatorship which fell into its hands in the course of the development of the revolution, the leadership will return to the bourgeoisie, and imperialism will become consolidated. If this state does not carry out a dictatorship and tries to become a bourgeois-democratic state, the revolution will be destroyed. The establishment of this dictatorship is necessary as a guarantee of the non-capitalist development of the revolution. The proletariat is fighting consciously for socialism. Therefore, the proletariat is the class that is most of all interested in such a development of the revolution. The main support of this dictatorship is the proletariat, even though this is not a proletarian, but a democratic dictatorship. The proletariat is aware of the objective sense of this dictatorship. It consists of the hegemony of this proletariat. Although at the present stage the proletariat is leading the revolution jointly with the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, it guarantees at the same time that the dictatorship will not forfeit its character. The proletariat is the support, the centre of this bloc, while the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry are its two wings. The proletariat is a class exploited thoroughly and to the hilt. That is why it fights consciously and objectively for socialism. But the other two classes still contain the germs of private property, that is, the germs of future capitalism. These two classes in their entirety will join the proletariat's struggle for socialism only when the germs of private property are destroyed. The task of the dictatorship is to destroy these germs within the bloc. Those germs of capitalist development in China which lie outside of the bloc must be destroyed by force and dictatorship. Within the bloc, however, this process must be clothed in another form.

In the course of the later development of the revolution, the proletariat will undertake the task of persuading its allies that the road to socialism is the only way out of the poverty in which the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry find themselves. The proletariat will not use violence in its fight against prejudices of private property, against the sense of private property rights which still exists among its allies. But it will prove in practice that the agrarian question cannot be resolved as long as private ownership of land is not abolished. On the other hand, the proletariat will prove that without the abolition of private ownership in all means of production and distribution, one cannot avoid the development of capitalism, that is, the enslavement of the petty bourgeoisie, the proletariat, and the peasantry. Thus, in exercising its hegemony, the proletariat will transform this revolutionary-democratic state into a democratic dictatorship without transforming it immediately into a dictatorship of the proletariat. The theses of the Communist International did not touch upon the question of whether this democratic dictatorship will be capable of leading (the country) directly to socialism, or whether an intermediate period of a dictatorship of the proletariat will be necessary; I assume that the discussion of this question can be postponed to a future time.

But even today, it is clear to us that objectively there exists only one perspective for the Chinese revolution: The perspective of non-capitalist development. This perspective will be lost only if the subjective forces of the revolution fail to fulfil their roles. The development of the Chinese revolution along non-capitalist lines hinges on the ability of the Communist Party to become clearly aware of this perspective and to translate it resolutely into reality.

No less clear is the fact that the development of the revolution has created a state which objectively bears the character of a democratic dictatorship. The proletariat and its party are likewise responsible for the machinery of this revolutionary state being properly used for intensifying the struggle for non-capitalist development and for the realization of socialism.

Thus, the Fifth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party must set this perspective before the Chinese revolution; it must be capable of developing the struggle in this direction. The basic task of the Communist Party at the present stage of the revolution is to organize the revolutionary bloc with the participation of the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie; to establish a democratic dictatorship; to lead the Chinese revolution on a non-capitalist path; and to transform the national revolution into a struggle for socialism.

4 May 1927

The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China*

The last Congress of the Chinese Communist Party took place two years and four months ago. The Party was then illegal and had only 950 members. The Fifth Congress represented a membership of over 50,000. This phenomenal numerical growth of the party does not adequately represent the growth of its political influence. The Communist Party, based upon mass proletarian and peasant organizations of the entire country, is the foremost factor in the present political situation.

The growth of the Chinese Party is unparalleled in the history of the Communist International. The Party has grown in the thick of a gigantic revolutionary struggle. It embodies the organized expression of the struggle of the toiling masses against imperialist domination and its native allies. It is the party of the proletariat steeled in actual fight, including a number of armed insurrections. It is the leader of the peasant masses in their revolt against feudal bondage and patriarchal reaction.

Two months before the Fifth Congress the Communist Party was asked by the Kuomintang to accept office in the national government. This was a recognition of the predominating position of the Communist Party—of the hegemony of the proletariat. Hitherto the proletariat fought and sacrificed for the revolution. Now the time has come for it to participate in the organs of power and responsibility. Acting upon the resolution of the Communist International, the Communist Party accepted the ministries of Labour and of Agriculture and Internal Affairs. In this stage of the revolution the importance of these two ministries is supreme. The Communist Party has become not only a legal mass party wielding decisive influence upon the political situation; it has come in possession of state apparatus which can be the instruments for further development of the revolution.

Class differentiation inside the Kuomintang has rendered its relation with the Communist Party closer than ever. The defection of the big bourgeoisie reduced the contradiction inside the Kuomintang ranks and has transformed it into a revolutionary bloc of the town petty bourgeoisie, peasantry and proletariat with certain strata of the national bourgeoisie marching with it. The proletariat being the backbone and driving force of this bloc, the relation between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang has greatly improved. This improvement assumed organizational expression in the creation of joint committee.

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* *International Press Correspondence* Vol. VII, No. 41, July 1927; signed article by Roy written at Hankow dated 13 May 1927. SNR

The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China had a number of fundamental problems to solve. The solution of these was not very easy. When the Congress assembled, nationalist China was menaced with imperialist intervention, a cordon of counter-revolution was formed under imperialist inspiration and with imperialist aid, to choke the revolution; and consequently the nationalist ranks, even to some extent the urban masses were somewhat panic-stricken. The entire revolution stood badly in need of a clear outlook and a determined leadership. The revolution had to be guarded against pessimism and defeatism. It needed a perspective to be able to meet courageously and surmount successfully immediate difficulties, however, grave. The historic role of the Fifth Congress of the C.P. was to put this clear perspective before the revolution and to contribute to the crystallization of a determined, courageous leadership indispensable in the period of revolution. The Congress has discharged this role, and by doing so it has demonstrated that the proletariat is the backbone of the revolution. Owing to the fact that it is still based upon a coalition of classes, the revolution cannot be exclusively under proletarian leadership; but the proletariat is the only force that can and will guarantee the leadership against the danger of vacillation and deviation. The proletariat is not leading the revolution. It exercises hegemony in the revolutionary struggle.

The main task of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China was to make a correct estimation of the situation. Upon this depended the possibility of giving the revolution a clear perspective and a courageous leadership. This task the Fifth Congress has accomplished by dispelling all doubt as regards the potentiality of the basic forces of the revolution. In analysing the political events, past and present, from the point of view of the proletariat, the Congress rejected the theory that the betrayal of the big bourgeoisie and threat of imperialist intervention constitute a check to the development of the revolution. On the contrary, these facts indicate that the revolution has entered the stage in which it bases itself upon the exploited classes whose interests, political and economic, do not admit any compromise with imperialism and native reaction. The proletariat and peasantry must determinedly fight imperialism and its native allies. In the course of this fight the entire energy of the toiling masses will be mobilized, thus deepening the social base of the revolution, promoting further development and guaranteeing its victory.

The Congress has pointed out how to resist imperialist aggression and to defend the revolution against the counter-revolutionary bloc reinforced by the big bourgeoisie. To lead the revolution along the line indicated by the Congress, firm determination and unflinching faith in the power of the masses are necessary. Since all the reactionary classes have turned against the revolution, the task of the revolution, in this stage of development, is to strike resolutely at the root of reaction wherever possible, particularly in the territories of the nationalist government. Therefore the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China has declared that essentially the national revolution must become an agrarian revolution. Imperialist domination in China is supported by militarism and the allied forces of reaction. The social base of militarism and reaction is the feudal character of Chinese national economy and political power. The Congress has resolved to lead the peasantry in a decisive struggle against feudalism. The slogan is: Land to the peasant; the peasant should have the political and military power to take possession of the land belonging to the big landowners. In taking this revolutionary decision the Congress has proved that the proletariat alone is able to lead the peasantry to make an agrarian revolution which is not only the basic condition for a successful fight against imperialism, but for free economic development of the country.

Peasant revolt is the most characteristic feature of the revolution in its present stage. In the provinces occupied by the nationalist army there exists a tremendous peasant movement. In several provinces peasant unions have become the predominating organized power. Peasants are arming themselves and disarming the forces of reaction. They are confiscating landlords' lands. This situation was reflected in the Congress of the Communist Party. The peasant masses are up in revolt. The proletariat must assume the leadership of this revolt. This was the consideration that governed the deliberation of the Congress.

The third important decision of the Congress was as regards the character of the state created by the revolution. The Congress found that, developing under the hegemony of the proletariat, the revolution is bound to establish a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat, peasantry and petty bourgeoisie. The present nationalist revolutionary government contains in it the germs of this democratic dictatorship. The participation of the communists in this government—in all its organs—will contribute to its development as the organ of democratic dictatorship. The Congress did not overlook the existence of timid and vacillating elements among the petty bourgeoisie, and proved the necessity of combating these elements as essential conditions for the consolidation of the revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie.

Leading members of the Kuomintang participated in the opening session of the Congress and declared their determination to strengthen the bloc with the Communist Party. Comrade Wang Ching-Wei was present when the representative of the Communist International reported on the perspective and character of the Chinese revolution. He expressed his complete accord with the report and declared that the petty bourgeoisie must march with the proletariat towards Socialism.*

The historic significance of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China lies in the fact that it has pointed out to the proletariat and its allies how to develop the revolution further as a mighty agency for the destruction of capitalism. The development of the Chinese revolution under the leadership of the bourgeoisie would create conditions in China favourable to capitalist stabilization of the entire world. This, in its turn, would spell defeat for the Chinese revolution.

The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China has proved that the Chinese revolution will and can be led further only under the hegemony of the proletariat, precluding capitalist development of China under the supremacy of imperialist finance. Thus the Congress is not only of national, but international significance—a landmark in the history of the fight for Socialism.

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* Wang Ching-Wei was not present at the opening of the Fifth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. But he attended the session on 4 May when Roy gave to the Congress his summary report on the Theses of the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI on the question of the Chinese revolution ('The Perspectives and the Character of the Chinese Revolution'). According to Pavel Mif, 'For the first time the CCP was given a truly Leninist prognosis of the events which were taking place, was given a thoroughly worked out perspective of the movement, as well as directives on a number of cardinal questions' (P. Mif, *Kitaiskaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia v Kriticheskie dni*, Moscow, 1928, pp. 117–18). According to Ts'ai Ho-Sen, Wang Ching-Wei 'listened with much attention', and later declared that 'the Kuomintang accepted fully the Comintern's interpretation of the non-capitalist development of the revolution'. (*Problemy Kitaia*, No. 1, 1929, p. 31). At the Congress session Wang asked if the petty bourgeoisie would 'follow the non-capitalist development of the revolution'. In his reply Roy explained that 'since the revolution, in its present stage, will be led by a coalition of classes . . . the proletariat cannot put forward a programme for the immediate abolition of private property'. However, 'the Communist Party will work jointly with the Kuomintang, but on the condition that it shares with it not only the responsibility, but the power as well . . . The perspective of the Chinese revolution is one of development toward socialism, not through a period of capitalism, but through a period of economic development founded on a non-capitalist basis. In this period of non-capitalist development, complete abolition of private property will not be included in the immediate programme of action'. (Roy's Speech on 4 May on 'The National Revolution and Socialism'; translated in *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*, pp. 231–33, from *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia*). According to a follower of Wang Ching-Wei, Roy's credibility, however, was undermined by Borodin and T'an P'ing-Shan who told Wang Ching-Wei that Roy was responsible for the policy of land-seizures by peasants, that Roy 'was the instigator of all the troubles', but that 'Roy had the complete confidence of Stalin, even more so than himself' (i.e., Borodin). (T'ang Leang-Li, *The Inner History of the Chinese Revolution*, London, 1930, p. 273). SNR

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*

'A sufficiently spectacular extirpation of communism and the would-be communists in Hunan and Hupeh can be relied upon'—thus gloated a Shanghai imperialist journal over the recent reactionary upheavals inside the nationalist territories. This hearty welcome given by imperialism exposes the real nature of Hsia Tao-Yin's insurrection and of the Changsha coup d'etat. The reactionary militarist elements in the national revolutionary army have undertaken a mission, the accomplishment of which will please imperialism; and imperialism relies upon the success of their mission. Obviously some tie binds the insurgent militarists of Hunan with imperialism. How could the latter be so confident of success of the rebels unless some way has been found to aid them in their counter-revolutionary venture? It is as clear as daylight who stand behind and inspire these revolts. Yang-Sin, Hsia Tao-Yin, Hsiu and their known and unknown fellows are all pulled by a string from Shanghai passing through Nanking. This string, which is meant to strangle China, extends beyond Shanghai overseas to the Chancellories and bank houses of imperialist capitals.

Hsia Tao-Yin, Hsiu and Co. do not massacre the poor peasants and hungry workers to defend the sacred right of private property, as they pretend. They are engaged in this murderous deed as agents of

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. VII, no. 42, 21 July 1927, p. 926. According to an editorial note prefacing the article in *Inprecor*, Roy wrote the article 'at the beginning of June' and sent it from Wuhan. It is also included in Roy's *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia* where the article is dated 'Hankow, 1 June 1927'.

On 18 May 1927, two days before T'an P'ing-Shan, a leader of the CCP, assumed office as Minister of Agriculture in the Wuhan government, one of the generals allied with the Wuhan government, Hsia Tao-Yin, the Commander of the Fourteenth Division, rebelled and sought to overthrow the government. The revolt was put down by the Communist general Yeh T'ing, but on 21 May general Hsiu K'e-Hsiang and some other officers staged the *coup d-etat* at Changsha. Another rebellion was organized by Yang Sin in Szechuan. Roy wanted 'to raise an irregular force several thousand strong for temporary operations against Changsha—pending the formation of the revolutionary army with peasant volunteers'. But 'Borodin controlled the purse strings' and he failed to supply the required money. (*M. N. Roy's Mission to China*, p. 103). On 9 June Roy urged on the Politbureau of the CCP to 'develop peasant insurrections, create a revolutionary army and reorganize the Kuomintang from below' ('The Counter-Revolution and Communist Tactics: Defense or Offense' in *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia*), but Borodin and the leaders of the CCP had decided to check the peasant uprisings and not distrub in any way the relation with the Left Kuomintang. SNR imperialism. Therefore, their mission is not 'a sufficiently spectacular extirpation of communism and the would-be communists'. It is to fight the national revolution which challenges imperialist domination and, by its very nature, is a standing menace to feudalism and its violent (peculiarly Chinese) expression, militarism.

The imperialist patrons of the renegades, in an unguarded moment, gave the secret away. The crusade of these diminutive militarists is not directed only against communism. The 'would-be communists' are also included in the list. This is clear.

Who are the 'would-be' communists? These are people in China who cannot possibly be damned as communists, who are, nevertheless, hated by imperialism and their native allies. Communism is advocated by one revolutionary class—the proletariat. There is, however, more than one revolutionary class in the contemporary structure of Chinese society. These do not fight for communism, but fight for political and economic conditions which cannot be created unless foreign imperialism is cleared out of the country and feudalism with all its ramifications is completely eradicated. These non-proletarian revolutionary classes constitute the overwhelming majority of the Chinese population. They are the peasantry and the middle classes. These are called the 'would-be communists' and Hsia Tao-Yin, Hsiu and Co's holy mission includes their 'extirpation' also.

These revolutionary classes are united with the proletariat in the historic struggle for the overthrow of imperialism and the liquidation of feudalism under the flag of the Kuomintang. The emblem of the anti-imperialist fight and struggle of the Chinese people is the Nationalist government of Wuhan. Consequently, those who, under the inspiration and to the great satisfaction of imperialism, revolt to extirpate 'communism and the would-be communists', are enemies of the national revolution, traitors to the Kuomintang and insurgents against the Nationalist Government. In one word they are counter-revolutionaries.

Development of the revolution always forces the crystallization of counter-revolution. Reactionary social elements, whose power and privilege are threatened by the revolution, naturally put up resistance. The first task of the revolution is to break down this resistance. The reaction, expressed through the militarism of Sun Ch'uang-Fang, Chang Tsung-Ch'ang and Wu P'ei-Fu, was given staggering blows by the victorious advance of the nationalist revolutionary armies. The military forces of the reaction were rolled back; but the social basis of reaction, namely feudalism, still remained alive in the nationalist territories.

The next stage in the process of revolutionary development is to carry the victory over reaction further ahead—to attack the social basis of reaction. Class-differentiation was inevitable. The nationalist bourgeoisie had participated in the struggle against imperialism and militarism, both of which factors are detrimental to their broad economic interests. But as soon as the anti-imperialist and anti-militarist movement entered a period of revolutionary struggle, the nationalist bourgeoisie sought to betray it. The more revolutionary classes captured the leadership of the movement and pushed it further.

The nationalist revolutionary movement, based upon the oppressed middle classes, peasantry and the proletariat, attacks feudalism, which attack is a sign of its development. The Chinese revolution has entered the stage in which national revolution essentially becomes an agrarian revolution. In this period a new set of counter-revolutionary forces raise their ugly heads. Until now the revolution was felt mostly in the urban areas. The revolutionary activities of the proletariat and military operations were the main features of the revolution.

Now the social significance of the revolution is becoming evident. The revolution spreads to the villages and attacks the old social order based upon feudal economic relations. Therefore, classes deriving benefit from the old social order, living and thriving upon unearned income from land, possessing absolute right to exploit the semi-serf peasant masses, resist the revolution. Their resistance is organically connected with that of the other counter-revolutionary forces, namely imperialism and the renegade national bourgeoisie. An unholy alliance of all the reactionary forces is thus formed to resist the revolution.

The unmistakable sign of the organic unity of all the diverse and territorially dispersed forces of reaction is that they all march under the self-same colour of anti-communism, varying only in shade. Chang Tso-Lin and his allies behead communists and massacre workers and peasants; Chiang Kai-Shek kills communists and destroys the labour movement; the little militarist of Kwangtung, Li Tsai-Shin, murders communists and attempts to stamp out labour and peasant organizations; Yang Sin began his crusade against Wuhan by slaughtering the communists; imperialism repeatedly indicates its willingness to accommodate a nationalist government provided it will be free from communist influence; and, lastly, Hsia Tao-Yin and Hsing Ho* undertake the holy mission of defending the Kuomintang and the Nationalist Government from 'excesses' committed by the peasant movement led by the communists.

In all these cases communism is only a bogey. The attack is actually against the national revolution. No one would believe that either imperialism or Chang Tso-Lin could be any more friendly to the national revolution than to the communists. It cannot be otherwise with others who sail under similar colours. When one attacks the classes that are the social basis of the national revolution, the organs of the national revolution, namely, the Kuomintang and the nationalist government are attacked.

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* The name given in *Kitaiskaia* is Tseng Kuo (Sun Fo), a member of the Wuhan government of Wang Ching-Wei. SNR

Anti-imperialist struggle is not a thing in itself. It is not an abstract conception. The Chinese people fight against imperialism because it impedes the economic progress of the country. Feudalism is a backward economic stage. Anti-imperialist struggle, therefore, cannot be separated from the struggle for the destruction of feudalism. Imperialism and feudalism help each other to keep the Chinese people in political, economic and cultural backwardness. The fight against imperialism cannot be carried further without at the same time intensifying the struggle for the overthrow of feudal relations in the village. The party that will lead the anti-imperialist struggle must also support the fight for the liquidation of feudalism.

This being the case, the anti-peasant uprisings of the feudal-militarist elements are directed against the Kuomintang and the Nationalist Government. The scarecrow of communism and the pretext of the so-called 'excesses' cannot confuse the issue. Just as Hsia Tao-Yin's revolt, the coup d'etat of Changsha is an open counter-revolutionary act. Its object is to destroy the anti-feudal movement in the village, and thereby shake the revolutionary democratic base of the Kuomintang and the Nationalist Government.

On the Eve of Chiang Kai-Shek's Return*

To save one's face is a very important consideration in the political life of China. Chiang Kai-Shek's dramatic resignation just at the moment when the Wuhan 'left' capitulated before Nanking, puzzled the world. There was doubt as regards who won. Chiang Kai-Shek's resignation was interpreted by many as indicating the victory of Wuhan over Nanking—not vice versa, as was really the case. As a matter of fact, Chiang Kai-Shek's resignation was a carefully calculated act to make it easier for Wuhan to capitulate—to make it possible for Wang Chin-Wei to betray the revolution without losing face before his followers.[1]

The reconciliation between the two factions of the Kuomintang signifies more than the formation of a feudal-bourgeois bloc against the workers and peasants. It also signifies the bankruptcy of the petty bourgeois democratic radicalism represented by the 'left' Kuomintang led by Wang Chin-Wei. The essentially reactionary nature of petty bourgeois radicalism was exposed by the tidal wave of revolution. As soon as the class struggle became fierce, the 'left' leaders hastened to join hands with the feudal-bourgeois right in the struggle against the revolutionary masses. The right reactionaries would welcome the left leaders, particularly Wang Chin-Wei, not in order to swell their ranks by so many individuals, but to win over the entire upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie to the side of counter-revolution. Wang Chin-Wei would be a valuable asset to counter-revolution only if he could bring with him a considerable section of his petty bourgeois following. Should it be necessary for him to go to Nanking as the vanquished, then Wang Chin-Wei could not be expected to do that. In that case the petty bourgeois masses would desert him as the traitor that he is.

For the petty bourgeois 'left' politicians the vital class-issues involved in the Nanchang split were not of much importance. The political significance of this split was not explained to the petty bourgeois masses. To them it was more a question of party democracy and personality. Therefore, Wang Chin-Wei could not lead his bloc out of the bankruptcy of Wuhan 'leftism' to be the camp followers of the feudal-bourgeois bloc, should this insist on having the hated Chiang Kai-Shek at its head. Chiang Kai-Shek had rendered his services to the counter-revolution, for the further strengthening of which the services of Wang Chin-Wei are now necessary. The doors of the temple of counter-revolution should be so thrown open to him that he could enter without losing face. As an act of staunch loyalty to counter-revolution Chiang Kai-Shek resigned.

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* Shortly after his return from China, Roy wrote this article at Moscow on 3 September and it was published under his name in *International Press Correspondence* Vol. VII, No. 53, 15 September 1927, pp. 1188–89. SNR.

[1] See note (1) at the end. SNR

The comic character of this resignation was evident from the very beginning. Immediately after his resignation there began the obviously inspired movement demanding his return. When Wang Chin-Wei went abroad to make room for Chiang Kai-Shek, the petty bourgeois left clamoured for his return to the leadership of the Kuomintang. Now Chiang Kai-Shek's return to the head of the nationalist army is demanded by the bourgeois right. The services of both are needed for the counter-revolutionary bloc from the feudal militarists to the petty bourgeois democrats. Chiang resigned only to return as a saviour, as an idealist who could sacrifice personal considerations for the unity of the party.

According to the latest news, Tan Yen-Kai and Sun-Fo, two outstanding leaders of the ex-left Wuhan group, have gone to Nimpo, where Chiang Kai-Shek is resting from his counter-revolutionary activities, to persuade him to resume the command of the united nationalist armies.[2] It is very significant that Tan Yen-Kai and Sun-Fo are chosen to carry the olive branch. In spite of their compromising association with the Wuhan 'left', these two are the typical representatives of the classes that supported Chiang Kai-Shek and in whose interests he split the Kuomintang. Tan Yen-Kai is a feudal militarist of the classical type. He had been a Tupan* for 15 years. He consciously represents the landlords and gentry. While, in June last, the agrarian question was sitting on the troubled breast of the Wuhan 'left' as a dreadful nightmare, Tan Yen-Kai declared in a meeting of the Kuomintang Political Council: 'I am prepared to give away my lands, but I cannot betray my own class'. Sun-Fo represents the comprador bourgeoisie. As mayor of Canton he bought up a number of large cinema theatres and several thousand mos of homestead land in the suburbs. Previously he belonged to the extreme right of the Kuomintang. He politically fought his father Sun Yat-Sen when the latter was alive.

These two and more were inside the Wuhan group as agents of the feudal-bourgeois right wing after it had split the nationalist front and turned against revolution. The existence of such elements prevented the development of the Wuhan government in the direction of democratic dictatorship. The petty bourgeois left did not carry on a struggle to drive these elements away, thus completing the split of the Kuomintang along the ever-sharpening line of class differentiation. Finally, the petty bourgeois democrats headed by Wang Chin-Wei capitulated before the agents of the feudal-bourgeois right wing, and the way to reconciliation between Wuhan and Nanking was clear.

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* Tupan—military governor of a province.

Now Tan Yen-Kai and Sun-Fo go to Chiang Kai-Shek to say: look, comrade, how successfully we have accomplished our job; we have destroyed the Wuhan left from within, though you could not do that from without; we have prevented the petty bourgeoisie from travelling on the road to revolution with the proletariat; and we have won Wang Chin-Wei for the counter-revolution. When invited by two such illustrious representatives of the feudal-bourgeoisie, who have so successfully combated the growth of a revolutionary left Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-Shek will certainly return to his post and grasp the hand of his ex-enemy Wang Chin-Wei, nearly as soiled as his own with the blood of the working class.

The bourgeoisie, however, is playing the game too cleverly. All these stage-managings will only defeat their own end. Wang Chin-Wei is not the idol of the nationalist petty bourgeoisie. He had a big influence upon the masses. The debacle of the most faithful follower of Sun Yat-sen frees the masses from the lingering influence of petty bourgeois radicalism. It frees the Chinese revolution from the fetters of the 'three peoples' principles'. Counter-revolution, led jointly by Wang Ching-Wei and Chiang Kai-Shek, will only quicken the development of the revolution.

Notes

[1] Moves towards a *rapprochement* between the Left and the Right wings of the Kuomintang had begun earlier but they became hectic immediately before and after the formal break between the Left Kuomintang at Wuhan and the Communist Party of China on 15 July 1927. To demonstrate his strength and unassailable position, Chiang Kai-Shek momentarily retired on 13 August, first to his native town, Fenghua, and then to Japan. In September Wang Ching-Wei went to Nanking, but failed in his efforts to reform a nationalist government. In December he relinquished his position as head of the Kuomintang and left Shanghai for France. Chiang, who had already been recalled from Japan in November, formally assumed command on 1 January 1928. SNR

[2] Sun-Fo, Sun Yat-Sen's son, 'was so volatile that his political enemies called him Sun Wu-K'ung, after the monkey pilgrim in the famous novel *Hsi Yu Chi*' (Jacques Guillermaz, *A History of the Chinese Communist Party 1921–1949*, 1972, p. 113). T'an Yan-K'ai was commander of the Second Army of the nationalist government. In March 1927 when the Left Kuomintang government at Wuhan had dismissed Chiang Kai-Shek from the position of Chairman of the Political Council and stripped him virtually of all his special powers, a seven-member bureau had been constituted at Wuhan to replace the Chairman's post. This bureau included both Sun-Fo and T'an Yan-K'ai and the Communist leader T'an P'ing-Shan. SNR

Introduction to *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional**

The collapse of the Kuomintang marked a sharp turning point in the development of the Chinese revolution. The process of class differentiation within the national movement—a process that was occurring simultaneously with the development of the revolution—reached its peak. The role of the Kuomintang, unifying all anti-imperialist and democratic forces over a period of several years, proved to be played out to the end. The class struggle, in its most acute form, became intertwined with the national struggle and, in the end, the Kuomintang betrayed the national revolution. Not only did it renounce the principles of freedom and democracy which it upheld over a period of several years; in the brutal encounter of class conflicts, the Kuomintang itself fell apart.

In the transitional periods between its individual stages, the revolution suffered a number of rather serious defeats. These defeats gave rise to doubts as to the correctness of the Kuomintang's policy during the first stages of the revolution. The opposition in the All-Russian Communist Party (B) and its adherents in other countries were saying that the defeats of the Chinese revolution were caused by the erroneous and 'opportunistic' policy of the Communist International.[1] These doubts can be dispelled and the groundlessness of this charge can be demonstrated by answering the following questions:

1. Was the policy of supporting the Kuomintang correct, (i.e.,) the policy of the Communist Party's entry into the Kuomintang and its collaboration with it during the first stages of the revolution?
2. Was the Communist International able to anticipate the situation created by the development of the revolution, and did it possess a correct policy in this situation?

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* Roy's introduction to the volume of documents submitted by him on his return from China in 1927 but published from Moscow and Leningrad 1929 under the title *Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*. In *M. N. Roy's Mission to China* this has been placed at the end as 'Conclusion' (pp. 370–6). SNR

[1] See note (1) SNR

This book provides the answer to the second question. By the end of 1926, the Communist International was already fully cognizant of the situation that had arisen in China as a result of the Northern Expedition. The Communist International took into account the fact that the national armies, having routed the Northern militarists, dealt a cruel blow to the might and prestige of imperialism in the entire South of the country, but at the same time it clearly foresaw the turning point in the process of the development of the revolution that followed from this military victory. The Comintern foresaw that the bourgeoisie would betray the national revolution and it advanced the policy of mobilizing the revolutionary-democratic forces as bases of the revolution in its new stage of development. The general practical instructions for the new situation, outlined in the theses of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, were later set down in more concrete form in subsequent resolutions of the Communist International. However, it is not enough to have a clear perspective and a correct policy. It is equally important to possess the instrument for putting this policy into practice. The documents cited in this book furnish exhaustive proof that the defeat was promoted to a considerable extent by the defects of the instrument through which the Communist International was forced to act in China.

In any given country, the Communist International can influence the situation first of all through the instrumentality of its section in that country. The Chinese Communist Party did not understand the full meaning of the resolutions of the Communist International and was unable to act in accordance with them. Furthermore, at the crucial moment its leaders refused to accept the instructions of the Communist International. The defeat was also brought about by many other objective factors; the decisive factor, however, is the role that the Party plays in a revolutionary crisis. The inability of the Chinese Communist Party to rise to the occasion is lamentable, but there were historical reasons for this. The Party was too young to accomplish without errors the gigantic task that lay before it. It lacked the necessary political development and experience. If one ignores—as does, in fact, Comrade Trotsky—the youth, the ideological immaturity, and the weakness of the Party's direction of vital factors in a revolutionary crisis, it would mean simply that one underestimates the Party's role in the revolution. This book shows the degree to which the stated factors influenced the situation. After barely two years of existence as a Party in the real sense of the word, the Chinese Communist Party was confronted squarely with the task of leading a revolution that involved hundreds of millions of people; its enemies were world imperialism and native reaction which included the bourgeoisie, united in a strong bloc. Founded in 1920, the Chinese Communist Party nevertheless remained right up to 1924 a small organization exerting little influence on the political life of the country. Similarly, this small group played no appreciable role in the ideological preparation of the great revolutionary movement. Until recently, the Marxist theory of revolution was virtually unknown in China, if one does not count the narrow circle of the intelligentsia which had no ties whatsoever with the masses. Such were the traditions of the Chinese Communist Party. The years 1925 and 1926 marked a tremendous gain in the numerical strength of the Party and its political influence increased to an even greater measure. At the beginning of 1927, it had 55,000 members; 33,000 belonged to the Komsomol. The worker's movement in the whole country and the peasant movement in the southern provinces were completely under Communist leadership.[2] The Communists were the most active factor in all spheres of the political life of the country. The Party leadership, however, could not keep in step with this sudden growth of the organization. This was quite natural. In view of its extreme youth and the absence of ideological traditions, the Party did not possess cadres that could yield new leaders capable of rising to the occasion. The Party developed in a period of stormy revolutionary struggle. It recruited new members and acquired political influence under the conditions of such struggles as the May 30 movement in Shanghai; the Hong Kong seamen's strike; the strike and the blockade of Hong Kong which lasted for years; the Northern Expedition; the Shanghai uprisings; the capture of Hankow; and so on. As a result, the Party underwent a veritable metamorphosis. From a small organization, consisting chiefly of intellectuals, it was suddenly converted into a mass proletarian Party, leading 2,500,000 organized workers and approximately 9,000,000 organized peasants who were drawn into the gigantic revolutionary struggle. The Party leadership, however, remained predominantly intellectual; it was stunned by the development of events and was unable to take command of the situation. It should be borne in mind that almost all the first leaders of the Communist Party came from the ranks of the Kuomintang and brought with them the reformist traditions of the Kuomintang. At the same time, the party was too young to put forward new leaders from its rank and file for replacing the old.

Such was the instrument through which the Communist International had to work in China. The difficulties which had to be confronted have been clearly shown in this book. A perfectly correct policy, conforming fully to the successive changes in the situation, could not be implemented due to stubborn opposition from the opportunistic leaders of the Party. On the other hand, the intrinsically healthy Party and the masses' will to struggle were likewise unable to influence the situation to any decisive extent—once again due to the interference of the reform-minded leadership. The counter-revolutionary *coup* in Changsha roused the peasants at once, and they advanced on the town from all sides. Around 2,000 soldiers under the command of counter-revolutionary officers were stationed in the town; against it, marched around 22,000 peasants, partly armed. In this situation, the provincial committee of the Party received a secret order from the Central Committee prohibiting the attack on Changsha and proposing that the peasants retreat and disperse in view of the fact that General T'ang Sheng-Chih could handle the situation by himself.[3] The minister of internal affairs—the Communist T'an P'ing-Shan—refused to issue the necessary documents legalizing the movement of the 8,000 armed peasants. The Political Bureau of the Central Committee did not insist that T'an P'ing-Shan take this action. One could cite numerous equally tragic examples to prove that the leadership was weak, opportunistic and semi-Kuomintang (in character), that it did not give the Party the possibility to act in accordance with the directives of the Communist International, and that this contributed greatly to the defeat.

The objection might be raised that the opportunism of the Communist Party leaders was a result of the International's preceding policy in China. Let us, therefore, reply to the question: Was the policy of supporting the Kuomintang correct, that is, the policy of the Communist Party's entry into the Kuomintang and its collaboration with it during the first stages of the revolution?

All the results of this policy demonstrate the necessity of a categorical reply in the affirmative. The task of the Communist International in China, as in all other colonial countries, is to mobilize all the available forces that can be led into the struggle against imperialism. It is perfectly evident that the classes which make up these forces cannot all be mobilized on the Communist platform. A much broader basis must be found for this purpose. In China, such a basis could be created by the Kuomintang. For this reason, the starting point of the policy of the Communist International in China consisted in the support of the Kuomintang, in giving it strength and assistance for the purpose of developing the anti-imperialist struggle.

For many long years the Kuomintang existed in name only. It was an (unofficial), amorphous association of scattered groups and political intellectuals' clubs enjoying the moral and material support of rich merchants, mainly from abroad. The Kuomintang was not a political party. Its programme was vague to the utmost; its organization was extremely diffuse. Its activities were chiefly conspiratorial in character and relied on favourable military combination and on taking advantage of contradictions between the imperialist powers. The movement had no roots in the masses. However, thanks to the important role that the Kuomintang played in the revolution of 1911 and in subsequent events, it had democratic traditions behind it. In general, the Kuomintang's platform was national independence, democracy and social progress. The national sentiments of the whole people and the indignation at the foreign yoke sought fitting and effective expression in the Kuomintang.

Under the influence and with the support of the Communist International, the Kuomintang turned into a political party with a revolutionary democratic programme and with organizational forms necessary for conducting an effective struggle against imperialism. The Kuomintang outgrew the traditions of conspiratorial diplomacy and military actions. It began to orient itself toward the masses. It understood that the active participation of the masses is the prime condition for the success of the anti-imperialist struggle. It was precisely in this period of its reorganization that the Communist Party entered the Kuomintang at the suggestion of the Communist International. Before this, the Communist Party was a small group that consisted primarily of radical intellectuals possessing no organic ties of significance with the political life of the country. In order for the Communist Party to develop, it was first of all necessary to do away with this isolation. By entering the Kuomintang, the Communist Party was acquiring organic ties with the national-revolutionary movement and was receiving an opportunity to exert influence on it.

As a result of such a tactic, the national movement became a mass movement developing under the flag of the Kuomintang. At the very same time, the Communist Party penetrated the proletarian and peasant masses and became their leader. The labouring masses could not have been mobilized so quickly into the anti-imperialist struggle had not the Communist Party participated in the national-revolutionary movement as a component part of the Kuomintang. Such was the first stage of the revolution—the Kwangtung stage. The national-revolutionary party became organized. The party won the confidence of the masses. The Communist Party received the opportunity freely and legally to build powerful workers' and peasants' organizations over a considerable extent of the territory. A national-revolutionary state was created which, with the support of the masses, repelled imperialist attacks from Hong Kong and crushed the military actions of the native reaction inspired and supported by the self-same imperialism. A national army was also created. In short, the national revolution found a sufficiently strong base and was prepared to spread to other parts of the country. Then the Northern Expedition started. On the second stage of the revolution, the policy of the Comintern was still to support the Kuomintang in order to carry the banner of the national revolution to other provinces in order to rout the Northern militarists who, in the capacity of agents of imperialism, ruled over Shanghai and the whole Yangtze Valley. The Northern Expedition gave the Communist Party a brilliant opportunity to conduct revolutionary agitation among the masses of a number of provinces. Many millions of peasants and workers, not as yet touched by the revolution, were not only drawn into the movement, but became organized under the exclusive leadership of the Communist Party. The military expansion increased the power of those feudal-bourgeois elements in the Kuomintang which were subsequently to betray the revolution, but at the same time the mass base of the revolution expanded to such enormous proportions that a guarantee was being created against any danger from the Right. The victories gained by the army under feudal-bourgeois leadership were of themselves of great revolutionary significance. The success of the Northern Expedition was indeed a big revolutionary victory. The crushing defeat inflicted on the northern militarists in the Yangtze Valley was a cruel blow to the power and prestige of imperialism not only in China, but in the entire Far East. The seizure by the masses of the British concession in Hankow and the uprising of the Shanghai proletariat who discerned the menacing forces of world imperialism poised for armed intervention, were the culminating point of the revolutionary development.

The Right feudal-bourgeois elements of the Kuomintang understood that the revolution was proceeding over their heads and that the Communists were supporting them only in the interests of developing the revolution. This betrayal by the feudal-bourgeois elements which in effect occurred in March 1927 was, however, anticipated by the Communist International back in November 1926 when it foresaw the third stage in the development of the revolution. It was assumed that in the third stage the revolution would be abandoned by the feudal-bourgeois elements and that it would be based on a coalition of three classes: the proletariat, the peasantry, and the urban petty bourgeoisie. In this period, the revolution was to develop under the slogans of land confiscation and democratic dictatorship. This course of development for the Chinese revolution was outlined by the Communist International in November 1926.

Support of the Left-Wing Kuomintang as an organ of struggle against imperialism and national reaction, including the traitorous bourgeoisie, became all the more necessary when the feudal-bourgeois elements turned against the revolution. The petty bourgeoisie, frequently constituting the majority of the population in Chinese towns, represents a highly important social factor in China. These petty-bourgeois masses were imbued with resolute anti-imperialist sentiments and they stood behind the Kuomintang. The peasant movement was spreading under the protection of the Kuomintang which commanded considerable authority among the peasantry. Even among the working-class masses, the Kuomintang still enjoyed great popularity. Under such circumstances, the Communist Party had to remain in the ranks of the Kuomintang and use it as the centre around which all revolutionary-democratic forces were grouping themselves. Such were the tactics of the Wuhan period. The Kuomintang was still the party of the national revolution. The Communist Party could not break with the Kuomintang, subjected as it was to attack by imperialism and native reaction; it would have resulted in confusion among the masses who still trusted the Kuomintang.

The purpose of collaboration with the Kuomintang during the Wuhan period was to free it once and for all from the influence of the feudal-bourgeois elements that had turned against the revolution and to convert it into an organ of democratic dictatorship under the hegemony of the proletariat. The leaders of the Communist Party could not understand this. For collaboration they substituted capitulation.[4] Their opportunism hampered the development of mass revolutionary action and, especially, the agrarian revolution which could crush the forces of reaction. In this case, defeat could have been avoided, and the revolution would have continued to develop uninterruptedly until it achieved final victory.

As it happened, however, the revolution suffered a series of defeats at the very moment when it should have outgrown the Kuomintang period. The basic reasons for the defeat lay in the objective conditions—the unequal alignment of forces. But the Bolshevik policy, pursued by the Communist International in the course of the subsequent stages of the revolution, had created for it such a firm mass base that had there been available at the critical moment a genuine Bolshevik leadership, the forces would have turned out to have been equal. In this event, the revolution, developing in a constantly rising movement, would have achieved final victory.

Notes

[1] For criticism of the official Comintern policy, see Leon Trotsky, *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, translated with an introduction by Max Shachtman, New York, first edition 1932, second edition 1962. Besides Trotsky's writings, the volume also includes Zinoviev's 'Theses on the Chinese Revolution', speech by Vuyo Vuyovitch, and the 'Letter from Shanghai', signed by N. Nassanov, N. Fokine and A. Albrecht (appendices pp. 313–432).

[2] The figures given by Guillermaz are:

CCP Membership

First Congress (1921): 57
Fourth Congress (1925): 980 (Youth corps: 2635)
April 1927: 57963 (Youth corps: 35,000)

Trade Union Membership
First TU Congress (1922): 270,000
Third TU Congress (1926): 1,240,000
July 1927: 2,800,000

Jacques Guillermaz, *A History of the Chinese Communist Party 1921–49*, pp. 83–88.

According to Ts'ai Ho-Shen (*Problemy Kitaia*, No. 1, Moscow, 1929), the number of peasants who took part in the uprisings in the spring of 1927 was 'not less than 15,000,000'. In his *Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan* submitted to the Central Committee of the CCP in February 1927, Mao Tse-Tung claimed that in Hunan in January 1927 the membership of peasant associations had jumped to two million, with a peasant following of ten million. (Dan N. Jacob and Hans H. Baerwald, eds., *Chinese Communism: Selected Documents*, New York, 1963, p.19).

[3] On 21 May 1927, General Hsu K'e-Hsiang, Commander of the 33rd regiment of 35th Army, overthrew the provincial government at Hunan, dissolved the local committees of the Kuomintang Left, and began a harsh repression of peasants, trade unionists and communists. Over a hundred people were killed at Changsha in the *Majih* (Horse Day) incident. Local communists and Kuomintang Left leaders mobilized over 22 thousand peasants against Hsu K'e-Hsiang, but they were ordered by the government and the communist central leadership at Wuhan to dissolve the armed peasant formations. T'an P'ing-Shan, Communist Minister of Agriculture in the Wuhan government, was opposed to confrontation. General T'ang Sheng-Chih on whom the Wuhan government relied at this stage went to Changsha and gave the anti-communist commander a clean certificate (Conrad Brandt, *Stalin's Failure in China 1924–27*, Harvard, 1958). Mao Tse-Tung whose proposal for land redistribution at the Fifth Congress of the CCP had been killed at the committee stage (C. Brandt, B. Schwartz and J.K. Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, Harvard, 1952, p.96) had been made Chairman of the newly formed All-China National Peasant Federation in May; as such he had 'to play a major role in discouraging peasant revolt in his own province'. (R.C. North, *Chinese Communism*, 1966, p.90). According to Brandt, Mao's task at this stage was to protect the families of the army officers and their land holdings against the rebellious peasants and the militants of the Communist Youth Corps. When Roy returned from Wuhan to Moscow he carried with him the impression that 'in the critical days of 1927 Mao represented the extreme right-wing view in the leadership of the Communist Party', that 'he had gone to Hunan with the object of "checking the excesses" of the Peasant Unions' (M.N. Roy, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*, 1946, p. 615). After the break with the Kuomintang in July and the removal of Ch'en Tu-Hsiu from the General Secretary's position on 7 August, Mao organized 'the Autumn Harvest Uprisings' in September, but these quickly ended in total disaster. He was dismissed from the CCP Central Committee. With the remnants of his army he retracted to Chingkangshan in the mountains of the Hunan-Kiangsi border.

[4] On 24 May Roy proposed to the Politbureau of the Chinese Communist Party that it should issue a declaration containing the minimum programme which would 'define the CCP's collaboration with the Kuomintang'. The proposed programme was as follows:

In the Realm of the Agrarian Question

1. The immediate establishment of democratic power in the villages and districts (*okrugi*); power must belong to the delegates' assemblies. The delegates must be elected by peasant unions and other people's organizations. 70 per cent of the assembly seats must belong to delegates of peasant unions. This is a highly democratic measure since the overwhelming majority of the rural population is made up of peasants.

The following elements must be removed from participation in these assemblies both in the capacity of members and in the capacity of electors: (a) large-scale landlords whose lands are subject to confiscation, (b) the gentry, (c) former officials.

2. Control of the armed forces (with the exception of the regular army) must belong to

the village and district organs of power under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

3. Creation of military-political schools for peasant delegates to train officials for new government organs and officers for the rural militia.

4. Organization of land committees, attached to rural organs of power, composed of representatives of peasant unions, local organs of power, the militia, and local committees of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. The functions of the land committees shall be: (a) to determine the land that is subject to confiscation, (b) to enforce confiscation of land belonging to large-scale landlords, temples, churches, capitalist companies, and so on, (c) to distribute the confiscated land, (d) to determine the size of taxes and rental fees.

5. Reduction by 50 per cent of the rental fee on unconfiscated land belonging to small landholders, and its reduction to the level of taxes collected by the state from confiscated land.

6. Legislation for curbing usury. Liquidation of peasant indebtedness.

7. Abolition of all duties and taxes, with the exception of a single land tax (on confiscated land), and the reduction of the rental fee (on unconfiscated land).

8. Establishment of argicultural credit banks. Confiscated public land and the ancestral and temple lands must provide a basis for credit operations.

9. Organization of producers' and consumers' co-operatives.

10. Regulation of fallow lands.

As concerns the Workers' Movement, here is our minimum programme:

1. Legislation on : an eight-hour working-day; minimum wage rates; labour conditions; protection of women and child labour; factory inspection; workers' control; protection of health; and education.

2. Practical measures for aid to the unemployed.

3. Establishment of factory committees for the protection of labour. Factory committees will not have control over production.

4. The right of workers to strike. Abolition of compulsory arbitration.

5. The Federation of Labour shall undertake to prevent cessation of work on any (arbitrary) ground.

6. The national government must take possession of, and put into operation, factories closed down by entrepreneurs who refuse to satisfy the demands of the workers or to pay taxes to the state.

7. Unions shall not exercise the right to arrest the entrepreneurs. All complaints must be referred to the court of arbitration, attached to the Ministry of Labour*, which has the right to arrest and punish the entrepreneurs at fault.

8. Trade unions shall have the right to arrest and punish workers who have turned traitors.

9. Pickets of armed workers will form a part of the militia attached to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.† The director of the militia of a given locality has general charge over the armed pickets jointly and in collaboration with the trade union.

10. The organization of pioneers (factory-school students) (*fabzavucheniki*) shall be under the strict control of the Federation of Labour and will be restrained from interfering in the administration of enterprises.

* The Minister of Labour was a Communist, and he could determine the composition of the court of arbitration. (M.N.R.)

† The Minister of Internal Affairs, who at this moment was a Communist, had supreme control over the police forces and, in this capacity, had the right to appoint, employ or discharge directors of the militia. (M.N.R.)

According to Roy's explanatory note in *Kitaiskaia*, the proposed 'resolution was neither adopted nor rejected by the Political Bureau'. From *Kitaiskaia*, 'Relations with the Kuomintang and the independence of the Communist Party'. SNR

The Lessons of the Chinese Revolution*

India must learn from the experience of China. The revolution in China has suffered a defeat. It came very near to success which could not be attained in this first effort because of the treachery of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Worse still: at the critical moment even petty bourgeois radical leaders like Wang Chin-Wei turned against the revolution. Indian revolutionaries must study the Chinese experience for their benefit. They will find great similarities in the experience gained in both the countries.

The history of the Indian revolutionary movement will always remain soiled by the Bardoli resolution which killed a tremendous mass movement in order to save the interests of the landlords. China has also had her Bardoli, only on a much larger scale and with a more disastrous effect. Just as our non-cooperation movement, so too the Chinese revolution has suffered a temporary defeat because of the betrayal of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalist leaders. These turned against the revolution as soon as it threatened capitalist and landowning interests. The development of the struggle for national freedom sharpened class-antagonism inside the Chinese society. Rather than sacrifice the sectional interests of the reactionary landlords and capitalists, the bourgeois nationalist leaders betrayed the revolution. Class-solidarity cut across national solidarity.

During the last years, when the national liberation movement acquired such gigantic dimensions, seriously shook the position of imperialism, and shattered the forces of its native agents (militarists), the driving force behind it was the working class. As a matter of fact, the Chinese nationalist movement had been a comparatively inconsequential affair based upon secret societies, diplomatic dealings, and military intrigues till the working class appeared on the scene as a powerful political factor.

The democratic national bourgeoisie began its political career with cowardice and compromise. The republic founded by the revolution of 1911 was practically killed hardly after it was born. The bourgeoisie deserted Sun Yat-Sen to place Yuan Shi-Kai at the head of the republic. Political views of Yuan Shi-Kai were no secret. Commander-in-Chief of the imperial army, he was frankly a monarchist.

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* *The Masses of India*. Vol. III, No. 9–10, September–October 1927; reprinted in *Labour Monthly*, November 1927. SNR.

He induced the boy emperor to abdicate only to strengthen his (Yuan's) hand in the fight against the republic. He went over to the republican side to destroy the republic. This design of his was quite evident. Still the bourgeoisie placed him at the head of the republic. Why?

It was not necessary to compromise with the arch reactionary monarchist agent. In 1912, when the republican bourgeoisie capitulated to Yuan Shi-Kai, the correlation of forces was essentially not unfavourable to the republic. Fourteen populous and rich provinces of the south and south-west were under the republic. A powerful democratic mass movement swept through these provinces. The rapidity with which the republican movement spread in the south promised its early penetration of the northern provinces. The Manchu court was nearly paralysed with fear. Yuan Shi-Kai opened negotiation with the republicans and went over to them, because even with his 'model army', he was not sure of victory. But the Manchu court and its generals were not the only people who were afraid of the potential forces of the revolution. The republican bourgeoisie was itself afraid that the revolution would go too far—further than the establishment of a National Assembly representing the bourgeoisie and limiting the absolutism of the corrupt court in the interests of the bourgeoisie. A repetition of the Taiping Rebellion was no more desired by the republican bourgeoisie than by the reactionary monarchists. Yet, the sure path to a real republic lay through the promotion of a mass upheaval. Signs of such an upheaval were discernible all around. The republic could be victorious, a democratic state established, modernization of the country undertaken, successful fight against foreign imperialism taken up only by leading the masses in the attack not only upon the Manchu Dynasty, but upon the entire system of feudal-bureaucratic exploitation. This, the bourgeoisie, who stood at the head of the revolution of 1911, did not want, did not dare to do. They would rather entrust the youthful republic to the mercy of the monarchist Yuan Shi-Kai than commit it to a revolutionary future. Sun Yat-Sen himself participated in that conspiracy to kill the republic. His 'idealism' was cowardice. He also did not want to lead the republican movement to revolution. He had organized and led the anti-Manchu movement exclusively from the limited point of view of the bourgeoisie. He had to step aside at the behest of the bourgeoisie. He had not yet discovered the reservoir of revolutionary energy. Twelve years of bitter experience—of defeat and disappointment—finally brought him to the masses. It was only then that the real struggle against native reaction and foreign imperialism began.

The Kuomintang became a real political party with programme, organization and systematic activities only in 1924. At the end of his eventful political life Sun Yat-Sen found his way to the people. Kuomintang became the fighting political organ of the people. Its base was removed from the rich merchants overseas and student clubs to the masses. The National revolutionary movement became a mass movement.

Neither Sun Yat-Sen nor the nationalist bourgeoisie came near the masses by choice. They were forced there. The nationalist centre of Canton could not be defended against native reaction and British intrigues from Hong Kong without the support and sacrifice of the workers. The working class had appeared on the political scene independent of the Kuomintang. Revolutionary activities of the proletariat had led to the organization of Trade Unions and of the Communist Party. The Communist Party representing the working class, on the instruction of the Communist International, in 1924 entered the Kuomintang thereby transforming it into a mass party. The Kuomintang came into organic touch with the masses. It found a solid base.

The nationalist movement entered the new stage of development with two outstanding events. They were: 1) The anti-imperialist movement of Shanghai beginning on 30 May 1925, and 2) The Hong Kong strike of the same year. The dominating and decisive factor in both those events was the working class. The first staggering blow to the power and prestige of imperialism not only in China, but in the entire Far East, was dealt by the 30 May movement in Shanghai.[1] The Hong Kong strike led to a year-long blockade which nearly choked the economic life of that base of British imperialism. Those two events and many more less outstanding ones placed the working class in the forefront of the nationalist movement. The political influence of the Communist Party grew enormously. Its influence inside the Kuomintang increased proportionally. The Kuomintang was pushed further towards revolution. It was forced to encourage the peasant movement directed against the landlords.

The bourgeoisie became alarmed. The most reactionary elements put up resistance to the revolutionization of the nationalist movement. They conspired to force the Kuomintang to break its relation with the masses. Failing to do that, they tried to split the Kuomintang. They went to the extent of assassination of the Left Kuomintang leader, Liao Chung-Kai.[2] Nevertheless, the mass movement grew with tremendous rapidity, adding strength to the nationalist movement.

Supported by the workers and peasant masses, the nationalist armies defeated the forces of the warlords, Wu Pei-Fu and Sun Chuang-Tang, paid and equipped by Anglo-American imperialism.[3] In less than a year the nationalist armies crossed the Yang Tse, occupied Shanghai and threatened the formidable militarism of the North. It should be remembered that before it won the support of the masses, the Canton Government had undertaken several military expeditions to expand its territories. All those pure military ventures ended in nothing. Now the nationalist army was welcomed by strikes and demonstrations paralysing all means of resistance by the reactionaries. Caught between the nationalist army and revolutionary action of the masses, the reactionary forces were driven back with ease. Nationalist occupation of Shanghai was aided by two armed insurrections of the proletariat. The arrival of the Nationalist Government at Hankow was celebrated by the proletariat taking possession of the British concession guarded by soldiers and protected by battleships.

Another stage of the national revolution had been past. The masses had fought for the national revolution—sacrificed for the national revolution. The national revolution had achieved considerable success. The position of imperialism had been weakened, native militarists had been beaten back, nearly half of the country had been brought under the domination of the Nationalist Government. The revolution must enter a new stage of development. Fruits of victory must be tasted. The programme of the revolution must be realized. The most urgent demands of the workers and peasants must be met.

Military operations had coincided with a phenomenal growth of the mass movement. The peasants in the provinces occupied by the nationalist army had organized themselves into Unions whose aggregate membership came near to 10,000,000. Kuomintang had promised the peasant land, lower rent, freedom from the oppression by the military-bureaucratic apparatus of the landowners, and local self-government. Now that the Kuomintang had acquired power in half of the country, it should fulfil its promise. The peasants demanded that. In some of the provinces the peasant Unions were the only organized power. Where the Kuomintang hesitated, they began the fight against the landlords. The revolution entered the village. National revolution began to develop into agrarian revolution.

In the cities, the workers also demanded that they should begin to taste the fruits of victory. They wanted higher wages; they wanted control on capitalist exploitation; they wanted political rights. The membership of the All-China Labour Federation had grown to over 2,500,000. The proletariat was to be found at the forefront of every struggle be it against foreign imperialism, or against native reaction. The Trade Unions were the bulwark of strength supporting the Nationalist Government and constantly fighting the reactionaries. In the process of struggle they assumed considerable political power. The function of municipal Government, including police-power fell in their hands.

The nationalist bourgeoisie became alarmed. The revolution was going too far. It was going beyond their control. The proletarian and peasant masses were not willing to relapse quietly into wage-slavery and serfdom after having conquered power for the native bourgeoisie. They demanded a share in the power. They demanded the fruits of the victory they had won. The bourgeoisie looked askance at these tendencies of the workers and peasants. By national freedom they meant the freedom for their class to exploit the Chinese workers and peasants. It became clear that the bourgeoisie and the working class had participated in the nationalist movement not with the identical object. Conflict of class interests was laid bare by the initial successes of the national revolution.

In consequence of this situation, the Kuomintang found itself in a severe crisis. The feudal-bourgeois right wing led by the commander-in-chief of the nationalist army, Chiang Kai-Shek, broke the united nationalist front, split the Kuomintang and turned against the revolution. A fierce attack began upon the worker and peasant masses whose support had enabled the nationalist army to win spectacular victories. In the provinces of Kwantung, Kiangsi, Fukien and Kiangsu, occupied by feudal militarist associates of Chiang Kai-Shek, workers' and peasants' organizations were dissolved.

In the end of February, when the nationalist forces under Chiang Kai-Shek were within a striking distance from Shanghai, the Shanghai proletariat declared a general strike and finally rose up in an armed insurrection to help the nationalist army occupy the city. The insurgent proletariat nearly captured power. The Northern forces in possession of Shanghai were demoralized; the imperialist powers did not dare intervene although they had a formidable contingent of troops and battleships ready at hand. Chiang Kai-Shek remained idle. He refused to hold the hand of the revolutionary proletariat extended to him so heroically. Thus betrayed by the nationalist generals, whom they wanted to help in the fight against Northern militarism and foreign imperialism, the Shanghai proletariat was defeated. While white terror reigned in Shanghai massacring the proletariat en masse, Chiang Kai-Shek watched callously.

A month later Shanghai was occupied by Chiang Kai-Shek's forces. For years the Shanghai proletariat together with the democratic petty bourgeoisie had fought for economic and political rights. Under nationalist regime, in the establishment of which they had assisted so heroically, the proletariat demanded an unconditional struggle against imperialism. The bourgeois nationalists wanted compromise with imperialism to crush the revolutionary proletariat. Hardly two weeks after his troops had occupied Shanghai, Chiang Kai-Shek turned upon the proletariat. Workers were shot down in the streets just as they had been in the former days by imperialists and northern militarists. Workers' organizations not accepting the military dictatorship of Chiang Kai-Shek were suppressed; their leaders killed.[4]

The imperialists had rushed sufficient naval and military forces to prevent nationalist occupation of Shanghai. But when Chiang Kai-Shek turned against the revolution and attacked the working class fiercely, it became clear that occupation of Shanghai by him would not harm the interests of imperialism. As a matter of fact he waited near Shanghai until he could get the permission of the imperialists to occupy the city. He could not have got the permission except on the condition that he would not touch imperialist interests, that he would join hands with imperialism to fight the revolution.

Development of the revolution menaced the interests of the capitalist and landowning classes. Further fight against imperialism would inevitably cause revolution in the internal social-economic relations. Land should be given to the peasantry. The proletariat should be secured against unlimited capitalist exploitation. The entire economic life of the country must be freed from the fetters of feudal-militarist oppression. In short, imperialism could not be overthrown unless its native allies were destroyed. Complete national liberation could be realized, conditions for rapid political-economic development of the Chinese people could be created only by seriously encroaching upon the privileged position of the classes whose representatives led the nationalist movement. This was the social contradiction inside the Chinese nationalist movement. Similar social contradictions are to be found also in the Indian nationalist ranks. Rather than surrender their privileges to the working class of the country, the feudal-bourgeois nationalist leaders would sell the country to foreign imperialism. Imperialist domination does not give them the fullest power; but their right to exploit the working class is not challenged. Revolution threatens the very right of class exploitation. Therefore, from the point of view of the exploiting classes, compromise with imperialism is more profitable than complete national freedom to be attained through revolution.

The petty bourgeois left wing of the Kuomintang in collaboration with some militarist rivals of Chiang Kai-Shek resisted the latter's dictatorship. But before long they were faced with the same problem of class antagonism. The design of the feudal bourgeois elements to betray the revolution and come to a compromise with imperialism could be frustrated only by the action of the masses. The revolutionary nationalist government of Wuhan could not exist without the support of the working class. When the big bourgeoisie went against the revolution, there were two ways before the petty bourgeois radicals: namely, to join wholeheartedly the workers and peasants in a determined attack upon the reactionary classes that were hostile to the revolution; or to follow the big bourgeoisie to the camp of counter-revolution.

The bourgeoisie, supported and encouraged by imperialism, began to mobilize all the forces of reaction against the revolutionary centre of Wuhan. But the petty bourgeois leaders of Wuhan hesitated to attack the roots of reaction in the territories under their control. The proletariat and peasantry, however, did not hesitate. They began the attack. Led by the Communist Party (the political organ of the proletariat), the peasantry rose up in revolt. National revolution became essentially an agrarian revolution. In the cities the proletariat began to arm themselves to defend the revolution.

The officers of the nationalist army were mostly landlords. They were hostile to the peasant movement. They were against any agrarian reform. When the peasants put forward the demand for the confiscation of landlord's lands, the army under feudal officers attacked the peasant movement. Counter-revolutionary insurrections took place demanding that the Wuhan government must suppress the workers' and peasants' movements and the Kuomintang must break with the Communist Party. The petty bourgeois radicalism of the Wuhan government went bankrupt. It capitulated before the reactionary officers defending the interests of the landowning classes. Workers' and peasants' organizations were attacked as fiercely as by the northern militarists and the counter-revolutionary generals of Chiang Kai-Shek. The Communist Party became the object of bitter hatred. Communists were arrested and executed in hundreds. Counter-revolution became triumphant throughout the nationalist territories. The petty bourgeois nationalists capitulated to the counter-revolutionary feudal bourgeois-militarist bloc which had already sold the country to imperialism.

The nation was sacrificed on the altar of class interests. The democratic (non-class) ideals of the Kuomintang were lost in the fierce clash of class interests.

The lessons of these revolutionary and counter-revolutionary events in China are that the nationalist bourgeoisie in the colonial and semi-colonial countries are essentially counter-revolutionary; that the national revolution to be successful must be an agrarian revolution; that not only the big bourgeoisie, but even the petty bourgeoisie, in spite of their radical phrases, cannot and will not lead the agrarian revolution; that the petty bourgeoisie when placed in power by the support of the workers and peasants do not share and defend this power with the working class, but hand it over to the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie; and that the working class operating through their independent political party (Communist Party) is the only guarantee for the success of national revolution.

The treachery and capitulation of the petty bourgeois left Kuomintang was instantly replied by the insurrection of the revolutionary troops led by communists. The insurrection became the rallying ground of all the revolutionary forces, including the petty bourgeois democratic masses. The revolutionary consciousness of these has been quickened by the treachery of their leaders. They are now convinced that the way out of the present political slavery and economic backwardness lies through a revolution affecting the very roots of the existing social system and that the proletariat is the only force that can lead this revolution.

The temporary character of the victory of counter-revolution is already apparent. The revolutionary army is raising peasant revolts all along the way. The peasants are arming themselves and beginning guerrilla war covering wide regions.[5] The proletariat in Shanghai, Canton, Wuhan and other cities are attacking reaction through constant strikes and demonstrations. The big bourgeoisie have become openly counter-revolutionary. The petty bourgeois leaders have sold themselves to feudal-bourgeois reaction. The working class alone stands true to the revolution and will fight till the final victory is won.

Notes

[1] On 15 May 1925 a Chinese worker, Ku Cheng-Hung, was killed by a Japanese foreman in a Japanese textile mill in the Shanghai international settlement. On 30 May students and workers staged a large demonstration; a British police officer gave the order to fire; twelve demonstrators were killed, over fifty were wounded, many arrested. Next day there was a general strike of students, shopkeepers as well as of all workers in foreign-owned factories. On 23 June there were further clashes; the British and French police fired into the crowd, killing fifty-two people. The events resulted in violent anti-foreign feelings and demonstrations which hastened the rapid growth of both the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party. There was a total boycott of traffic between Hong Kong and Kwantung which continued till September 1926. Mao Tse-Tung later told Edgar Snow (*Red Star over China*, p.157) that 'after the May 30 incidents the Hunanese peasantry became very militant'. For May 30 movement see Jean Chesneaux, *Le Mouvement Ouvrier Chinois 1919–27*, Paris, 1962; also Guillermaz, *op.cit;* and Conrad Brandt, *Stalin's Failure in China 1924–27*, Ch. III. SNR

[2] Liao Chung-K'ai was a very close follower of Sun Yat-Sen and the strongest leader of the left wing of the Kuomintang. He was an ardent supporter of the Kuomintang-Communist alliance. His principal opponents were Hu Han-Min and Tai Chi-T'ao (author of *The Philosophical Foundations of Sun Yat-Senism* and personal adviser to Chiang Kai-Shek) who advocated break with the communists. After Sun Yat-Sen's death in March 1925 the conflict between the two wings greatly sharpened. On 20 August 1925, Liao Chung-K'ai, then Finance Minister in the Wuhan government, was assassinated. Hu Han-Min was implicated in the murder through his brother; he was forced to leave Canton and was despatched to Moscow. According to some accounts he was seized in Shanghai and taken

to Vladivostok. Guillermaz, *op. cit.*; Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-Tung*, New York, 1966; North, *Chinese Communism*.

[3] Among the principal warlords of the period were: Wu P'ei-Fu and his group controlling the provinces of Honan and Hopei and indirectly Szechuan, Yunnan and Kweichow; Sun Chu'an-Fang (Sun Chuang-Tang) and his group controlling East China from the Shanghai region to that of Nanch'ang in Kiangsi; Chang Tso-Lin holding Manchuria, the Peking area and Shantung; 'the Christian General' Feng Yu-Hsiang whose sphere of influence included Kansu, Suiyan and Chahar; and Yen Hsi-Shan, the 'model governor' of Shansi. T'ang Sheng-Chih, Commander of the Eighth Army, held Hunan; he was Chiang Kai-Shek's military rival and was trusted by the Wuhan Left Wing and Borodin who relied heavily on his military support. In 1929–30 he backed Wang Ching-Wei unsuccessfully in the latter's struggle with Chiang Kai-Shek. Jacques Guillermaz, *op. cit.*; North and Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*.

[4] The massive general strike in Shanghai in late February developed into an insurrection, and the Labour Unions, led by the Communists, were briefly in control of Shanghai. But the insurrection was put down by the local garrison commander, Li Pao-Chang. The city was captured by the Nationalists on 22 March and Chiang Kai-Shek himself arrived on 26 March. The local communists were planning a second general strike and armed resistance to Chiang, but they were asked by the Central leadership of CCP on Moscow's instruction to bury their weapons and cooperate with Chiang Kai-Shek. According to G. Sokolsky, at that time an American Coorespondent in China, 'the Shanghai Chinese Bankers' Association. . . arranged for an immediate 3,000,000 dollar loan to Chiang Kai-Shek' (*The Tinder Box of Asia*, London, 1932). On 12 April at 1 a.m., Chiang began his operation with squads of armed men, 'all dressed in blue trousers and wearing a white arm-band', who began rounding up communists and labour picket guards. Trade union headquarters were occupied, and several hundred people were killed and a larger number wounded. 'Within a few days Communist strength in Shanghai was shattered' (North, *Chinese Communism*, p. 85). Also Brandt, *Stalin's Failure in China*.

[5] Published in the September-October issue of *The Masses*, the article was presumably written by Roy almost immediately after his return to Moscow from China. On 1 August , under the direction of Comintern's new representative in China, Besso Lominadze, uprisings were initiated at Nanchang by communist officers Yeh T'ing and Ho Lung. During September Mao Tse-Tung organized the 'Autumn Harvest Uprising'. For a few days in late September Yeh·T'ing's forces occupied Swatow and 'the Comintern reported the victory with great enthusiasm'. The note on which Roy's article ended reflected this sense of 'a new revolutionary upsurge'. The uprisings were brutally crushed; the insurrection in Canton which followed in December under the inspiration and instruction of the other Comintern representative, Heinz Neumann, ended in swift and total disaster. J. Guillermaz, 'The Nanchang Uprising', *The China Quarterly*, July-September, 1962; Nym Wales, *Red Dust*, Stanford, 1952. SNR

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*

. . . Many things contributed to the defeat of the Chinese revolution. Four factors can be indicated as the most important: 1. Imperialist intervention; 2. Superior military and economic strength of the counter-revolutionary feudal-bourgeois bloc; 3. Youthfulness and lack of adequate preparation of the forces of revolution; and 4. Political weakness, opportunism and capitulatory policy of the leaders of the Communist Party.

1. Imperialist intervention took the form of terrorism and economic blockade. For two months Wuhan was threatened by a formidable array of battleships.[1] But the most effective intervention was economic blockade. All the foreign banks were closed. Trade was suspended. Imperialism, however, was not intransigent. It always indicated its willingness to consider moderate propositions thus encouraging the right tendency in the nationalist government. On the plea of intervention-danger the Nationalist Government put ever-growing limits to the labour movement and its position vis-a-vis imperialism gradually came down to the compromising level of the Nanking government. The danger of imperialist intervention, however, was not as imminent as it was purposely depicted by the Kuomintang leaders always looking out for an opportunity to curb the revolution. Economic blockade was a double-edged knife. It cut both ways. It hurt the foreign traders no less than the Chinese. It was only a question of time. If the resistance continued a month or so longer, imperialism would have given way. Since the British did not dare take back their Hankow concession by force, it was clear that danger of active armed intervention in Wuhan territories could not be very imminent. Anyhow the threat of intervention was enough to strengthen bourgeois influence in Wuhan.

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* This is the middle portion of an article by Roy published in The *Masses of India*, Vol. III, No. 11, November 1927. Six paragraphs have been left out from the opening section and four short paragraphs from the end. The portion reproduced here summed up his explanation of the Chinese debacle while he was still a member of the Comintern Executive. At the ninth plenum of the ECCI (9 to 25 February 1928), although Roy was present and duly elected to the presidium, he was not given a chance to speak on the Chinese question. After his break with the Comintern he wrote his famous book *Revolution and Konterrevolution in China*, Berlin, 1930, SNR

[1] See note at the end of the article. SNR

2. The split left Wuhan in a worse position militarily and economically. With the exception of Hupeh and Hunan all the nationalist provinces were under the control of Chiang Kai-Shek. Even Hunan was only nominally under the Nationalist Government. The army, state apparatus and finances of the province were practically independent of Wuhan. Chiang Kai-Shek's group had an army of approximately 150,000 as against about 80,000 of Wuhan, 50,000 of which (T'ang Sheng-Chih's troops) were beyond its control. While Chiang Kai-Shek had the financial backing of the Shanghai bourgeoisie, Wuhan was in a desperate position. As soon as Wuhan was occupied by the nationalist forces, rich merchants either ran away or locked up their money in the foreign banks. Left character of the Wuhan group was mainly due to its struggle against Chiang Kai-Shek's counter-revolutionary clique. But as under given conditions an actual military struggle for the capture of Nanking and Shanghai was not feasible, struggle against Chiang Kai-Shek became a mere subject for demagogy to avoid revolutionary tasks which could be practically accomplished and to divert the attention of the masses from the vital issues of the revolution.

3. The tremendous revolutionary forces that developed simultaneously with the victorious advance of the nationalist army from Kwangtung to the Yangtze had not been properly organized, trained and equipped. An erroneous conception of united front on the part of the communist leaders obstructed the sharpening of the class struggle from the side of the workers and peasants while the landlords and capitalists were all along organizing their forces consciously with the same purpose. This erroneous conception of united front prohibited the struggle against Chiang Kai-Shek after the *coup d'etat* of 20 March thereby giving him the chance of consolidating his power.[2] It was again this erroneous conception of united front that was responsible for the fact that when the feudal-bourgeois right-wing led by Chiang Kai-Shek split the party, the masses did not clearly understand the counter-revolutionary significance of the issue and the Kuomintang split not horizontally on class lines, but vertically on the squabble over prestige and personalities. Had the class issues involved been clearly defined, the anti-Chiang Kai-Shek faction might have been forced by mass pressure to commit itself to a clearer social orientation and political platform. Even after the split, which so clearly demonstrated the relativity and unreliability of the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie, the communist leaders (particularly Chen Tu-Hsiu) stuck to the erroneous conception of united front. The Wuhan group was looked upon as a bloc to be treated collectively—to be supported or criticized as a whole. There was no differentiation between the feudal aristocrat Tan Yen-Kai and the radical intellectual Wang Chin-

Wei or between the feudal militarist Tang Seng-Chih and the petty bourgeois Teng Yen-Ta. Such a policy could naturally not quicken the process of class differentiation, the initial political expression of which was the Nanchang split. If the political mobilization of the masses was so defective, military preparation was totally lacking. Neither the Kwangtung period nor the period of unrestricted freedom during the Northern expedition had been utilized to arm the workers and peasant masses. This shows that class struggle and revolutionary insurrection of the working class for power had not been visualized as a near possibility within the realm of practical politics. No real basis of revolution had been created inside the army. Mercenary armies under personal control of reactionary feudal generals had been relied upon as the only instrument of revolution.

4. The leading members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party never believed in the perspective of democratic dictatorship. In the Fifth Congress of the Party in May, Chen Tu-Hsiu expounded the theory that after a period of rapid development, which had coincided with the Northern Expedition, there must be a decline in the revolutionary movement. The Central Committee of the Communist Party did not press the agrarian question on the plea that that would prejudice the relation with the Kuomintang. This opportunist policy was continued even after the Fifth Congress which, acting upon the theses of the Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, had accepted the point of view that further development of national revolution must take the form of agrarian revolution. When the Kuomintang under the pretext of counteracting the danger of intervention and of removing the discontent of the 'revolutionary officers' (feudal militarists who dominated the armies of the Wuhan government) took measures restricting the development of the revolutionary mass movement, no opposition came from the Communist Party. The capitulatory policy was imposed upon the Communist Party by the leaders who argued that the 'left' Kuomintang is obliged to retreat before superior forces; the communists must help it in this tactical move; that the communists must explain to the masses the necessity of this retreat. And the communists did so. Trade Unions in Wuhan under communist leadership introduced 'revolutionary discipline' politically forbidding all forms of class struggle that annoyed the Kuomintang.[3] The Trade Union Federation of Hupeh ordered temporary suspension of the struggle against capitalism.

The more the Kuomintang attacked the masses, the weaker became the communist resistance. The more counter-revolutionary became the actions of the Kuomintang, the more capitulatory became the policy of the Communist Party. Finally, on 3 July the

Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party adopted the 'platform of retreat'. Counter-revolution was there in all its nakedness; the Communist Party called upon the masses to give up all resistance. This shameful capitulation was made by the communist leaders expressing their faith in the 'three Peoples' Principles' of Sun Yat-Sen. . .

These four factors together with many other minor ones strengthened the feudal, militarist and bourgeois elements inside the Wuhan group and prepared the ground for the reconciliation with Nanking. Soon after the split these elements saw that they were in undesirable company. Should they act according to their conviction and class interests, there would be no difference between Wuhan and Nanking. Any other way led to their own destruction. Therefore, the policy from the very beginning was to return to their fold without losing face.

Already in May, that is, two months after the split and a month after the massacre of the Shanghai workers by Chiang Kai-Shek it became clear that there was little essential difference between Wuhan and Nanking. The hostility of the Wuhan Kuomintang against agrarian reform (not to speak of revolution) became more and more pronounced every day. The Kuomintang issued manifestoes restricing workers' and peasants' movement and holding it responsible for the split of the Kuomintang and danger of imperialist intervention. The feudal-militarist elements began open attack upon the workers and peasants . . . Finally, the petty bourgeois leaders, notably Wang Chin-Wei capitulated before the reactionary feudal-bourgeoisie. The way to the formation of a counter-revolutionary feudal-bourgeois bloc on the basis of a reconciliation between Wuhan and Nanking was clear. Counter-revolution was triumphant, though only for the time being.

The process of class-differentiation in the nationalist revolutionary movement, that began with the Nanchang crisis, could not, however, be obstructed. On the contrary, the betrayal of the revolution by the Wuhan group makes the class line sharper than ever. Class-differentiation is a necessary process in the development of the revolution. The Wuhan period of the revolution aided the clarification of this process. By virtue of their struggle against Chiang Kai-Shek who had betrayed the revolution before them, the Wuhan group appeared before the masses as the defenders of the national revolution. These feudal-bourgeois leaders could not be overthrown until by their own action they stood unmasked before the masses. The policy of supporting the Wuhan group, apart from the possibilities thereby gained to gather the forces of the revolution, could have led directly to the final victory of the national revolution, had the factors enumerated above not operated. As it is, the events moved towards the second perspective of a feudal-bourgeois counter-revolutionary bloc—a perspective not unexpected. The co-relation of forces were not favourable to victory with one blow. But the ground has been cleared for a fight on clear class issues[4]. . . .

Notes

[1] On 1 May 1927, *Chinese Correspondence*, Hankow, published Roy's article 'Imperialist intervention in China' in which he wrote: 'Not only Shanghai but the entire Yangtse river is packed with war vessels. . . The seat of the Nationalist government, Hankow, is practically a beleaguered city'. Quoted in Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, Stanford, (revised ed. 1951,) p. 207.

[2] On the night of 18 March 1926, the Kuomintang gunboat *Chung-Shan,* commanded by a Chinese communist officer Li Chih-Lung, moved about 20 kilometres east of Canton opposite the Whampoa Military Academy, where Chiang Kai-Shek was thought to be. Chiang, who was in Canton, called the gunboat back, and had the commander arrested. 'During the night of 20 March at 3 a.m., Chiang had most of the communist cadres in the Military Academy, a total of 25 men, including Chou En-Lai either arrested or kept under close supervision while the Soviet advisers were placed under house arrest'. (Guillermaz, p. 99). Chiang's forces surrounded labour union headquarters, railway stations and the Central Bank. To the Chinese communists and the Russian advisers the *coup* came 'as a lightning shock'. However, after the *coup*, Chiang assured the Russians and the Chinese communists that he did not intend a break with them. The assurance was accepted. The Comintern decided to continue to 'utilize him for the cause of the National Revolution'; Ch'en Tu-Hsiu wrote on 6 June 1926, to Chiang Kai-Shek that the latter 'was one of the pillars of the National Revolution'. (C. M. Wilbur and J. L. Y. How, *Documents On Communism, Nationalism, and Soviet Advisers in China 1918–27*, New York, 1956; B. I. Schwartz, *Chinese Communists and the Rise of Mao*.)

What Roy did not mention was that at this stage, in spite of the *coup* of 20 March, the Comintern continued to back Chiang, that Russian policy was 'to cooperate with Chiang to the very end possible' (North, *Chinese Communism*, p.67). Wang Ching-Wei, President of the national government, left for France on 11 May, ostensibly for reasons of health, but actually because he was exasperated by Chiang's conduct. With the support of Borodin and the Russian advisers, Chiang was appointed Commander-in-Chief, and on 6 July he was elected Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Kuomintang. Some CCP leaders were initially opposed to the Russian policy, but they submitted to instructions from Moscow. (C. Brandt, *Stalin's Failure in China 1924–27*, Harvard, 1958).

[3] Even after Wang Ching-Wei had publicly announced his opposition to the Communists, the Central Committee of the CCP, according to the communist historian Hu Hua (*Essays on the History of the Chinese Revolution*, Peking, 1959), drew up a declaration in eleven points on 30 June 1927, which included the following: 'The Kuomintang, being an alliance of workers, peasants and small capitalists against imperialism, ought naturally to assume the leadership of the national revolution. . . Mass organizations—workers, peasants and others—must submit to the leadership and control of the Kuomintang authorities . . . the trade unions must not encroach on the owners' rights in matters of employment and management' (Translated and quoted by Guillermaz, p. 137).

[4] After the Eighth Plenum of the ECCI (8-30 May 1927), Bukharin in a statement in *Pravda* (No. 145, 30 June 1927) declared that the Soviet state would continue to maintain relations with the Nanking government, but this did not signify 'approval' of Nanking's policies. On 1 August 1927, at a Joint Session of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Russian Communist Party, Stalin admitted that 'the feudal

lords and imperialists in China proved at this stage to be stronger than the revolution . . . the pressure exercised by these hostile forces induced the Wuhan Kuomintang to swing to the Right and led to the temporary defeat of the Chinese revolution', but he justified the Comintern's China policy by quoting his telegram which reached the CCP leadership and the Comintern's delegates in China on 1 June 1927. (J. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* pp. 323–29). On 7 August, the same Joint Session resolved: 'If the Chinese revolution has suffered a severe defeat in spite of the correct tactics of the Communist International, this had occurred, first, because of the alignment of class forces both in China and internationally; second, because the masses have not yet had time to organize forces powerful enough to defeat the combined forces of the enemy, the forces of foreign imperialism, the feudal elements and the counter-revolutionary national bourgeoisie; finally, because the working class is not strong enough to form a strongly organized mass Communist Party. Moreover, the leaders of the Communist Party of China, in systematically rejecting the instructions of the Comintern, bear partial responsibility for the defeat of the Chinese working class and peasantry'. (*International Press Correspondence,* 18 August 1927, pp. 1075). At the Fifteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, while Bukharin recognized (10 December 1927) that 'the Chinese revolution shows very clearly how cautious one must be when deciding on concrete political tactics, how necessary it is to take into careful consideration the peculiarities of development' of each colonial and semi colonial country, Stalin declared (3 December 1927) that 'People's revolutions never win to the end in the first round of the fight . . . the Chinese revolution has awakened hundreds of millions of exploited and oppressed people from centuries of slumber . . . has torn the mask from the lackeys of counter-revolution . . . has consolidated the authority of the Communist Party among the masses. . . ' (X. J. Eudin and R. C. North, *Soviet Russia and the East 1920–27: A Documentary Survery*, Stanford, 1957, pp. 391–96). SNR

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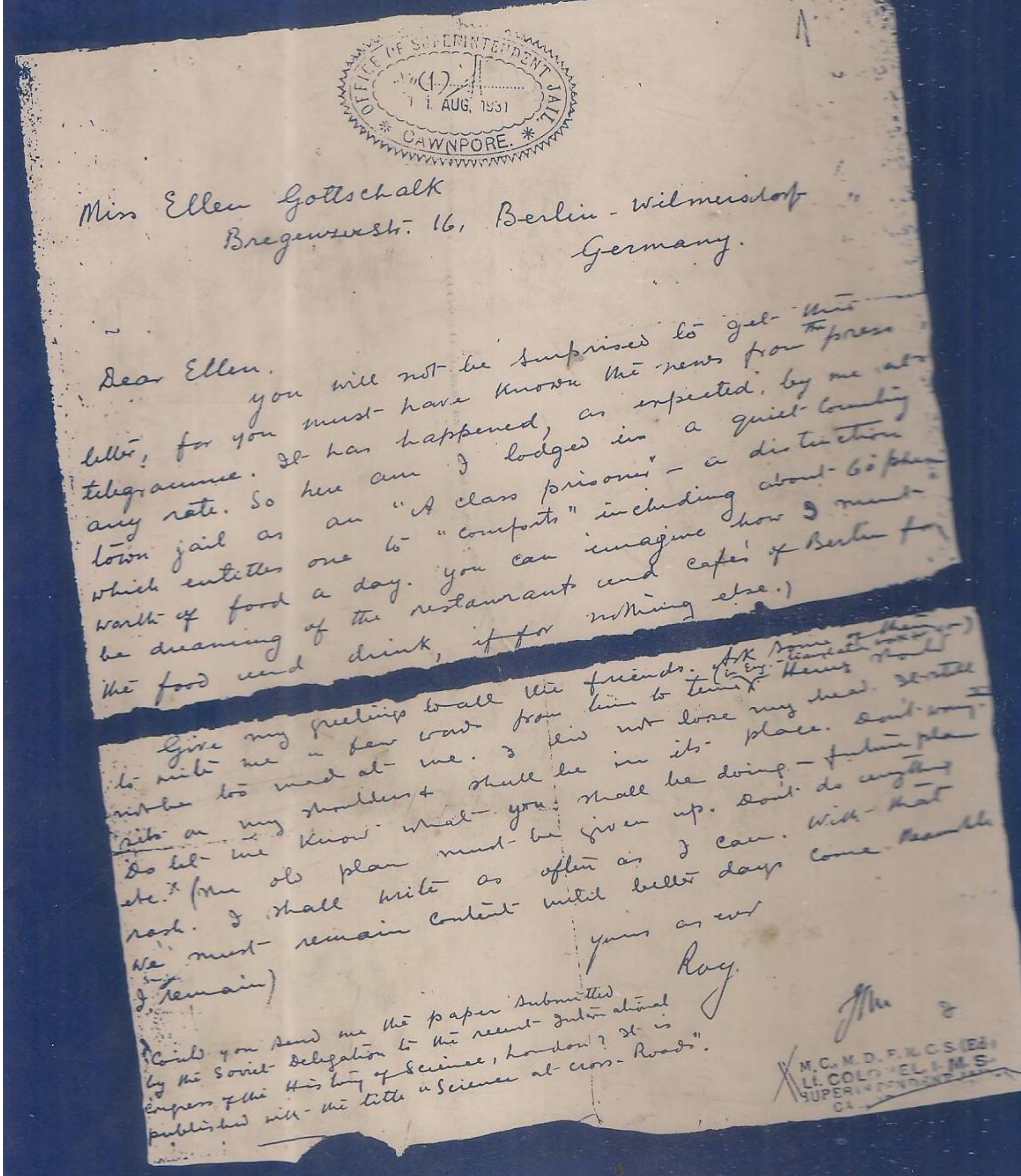
Back panel illustration: Facsimile of excerpts from a letter written by M. N. Roy to Ellen Gottschalk during his detention in Kanpur jail, August 1931.

Courtesy Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.



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OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT JAIL
No 12
11 AUG, 1931
CAWNPORE.

Miss Ellen Gottschalk
Bregenzerstr. 16, Berlin - Wilmersdorf
Germany.

Dear Ellen,
you will not be surprised to get this letter; for you must have known the news from the press telegramme. It has happened, as expected, by me at any rate. So here am I lodged in a quiet country town jail as an "A class prisoner" — a distinction which entitles one to "comforts" including about 6 pence worth of food a day. You can imagine how I must be dreaming of the restaurants and cafés of Berlin for the food and drink, if for nothing else.)

Give my greetings to all the friends. Ask some [illegible] (in Eng.) Heinz should to write me a few words from him to tem x. I did not be too mad at me. I did not lose my head. It still sits on my shoulders + shall be in its place. Don't worry. Do let me know what you shall be doing — future plan etc.x (The old plan must be given up. Don't do anything rash. I shall write as often as I can. With that we must remain content until better days come. Meanwhile I remain)

yours as ever
Roy.

Could you send me the paper submitted by the Soviet Delegation to the recent International Congress of the History of Science, London? It is published with the title "Science at Cross-Roads".

M.C., M.D., F.R.C.S. (Ed.)
Lt. COLONEL I.M.S.
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